



Vol. 1

ARTIFACT ONE

#

0

OF 5
COVER A

J.T. Krul • Vince Hernandez
Romina Moranelli • Dezi Sienty



**Premiere
Issue!**

aspencomics.com



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Premiere
Issue!

aspencomics.com

Aspen Comics presents
an all new original series

ARTIFACT ONE

Issue Zero

“TRUTHSEEKER”

Most people are content to see
the world in the most basic of terms.
Sun. Sky. Soil. Trees. Water.

written by:
J.T. Krul

and
Vince Hernandez

Me? I
look closer.

I can't help it. An endless
stream of questions flow in
my mind, and the only way
to find the answers is by
digging deeper.

By discovering.

with Illustrations by:
Romina Moranelli

and lettering by:
Dezi Sienty

It's not as easy
as it sounds.

You have to be
patient.



Direct Edition
by ROMINA MORANELLI



Direct Edition
by JP MAVINGA
& ROMINA MORANELLI

Observant.

Proactive.

EDITORS: Frank Mastromauro & Gabe Carrasco
DESIGN & PRODUCTION: Mark Roslan LOGO DESIGN: Peter Steigerwald FONTS: Blambot

ARTIFACT ONE created by J.T. Krul and Vince Hernandez
For Aspen: Founder: Michael Turner Co-Owner: Peter Steigerwald Co-Owner/President: Frank Mastromauro
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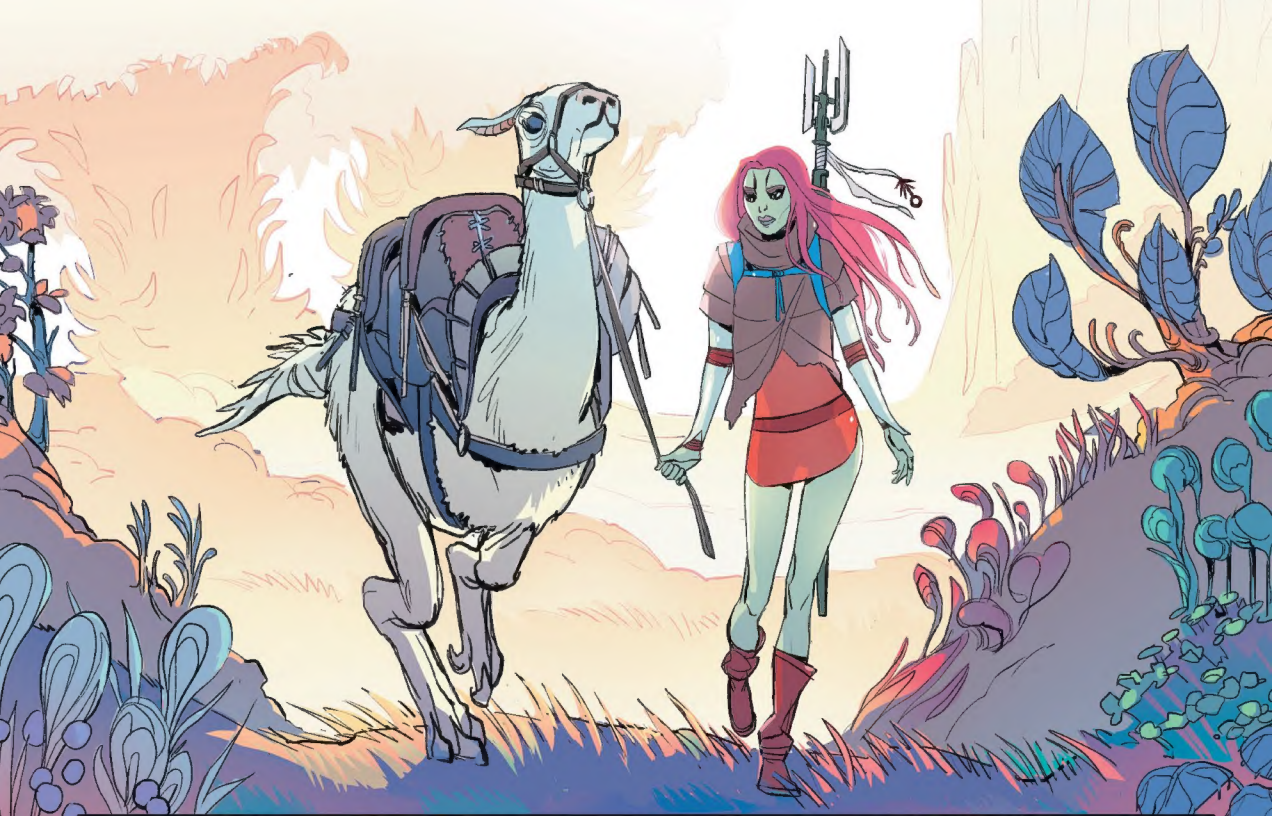
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Not to mention,
quick on your feet...



...And off of
them too.





The Kingdom
of Kaladon.





The marketplace offers just about everything you can imagine. Food. Clothing. Jewelry. Weaponry. You name it, they have it.

But, I'm not looking to buy anything today.



I'm selling.

Beautiful!



Endoscine. Grisling. Barulsa. Picked this very morning.

Ah, Remi, you always bring me the freshest herbs.



I'll give you ten.

Ten? They are worth more than that. I was thinking fifteen.

Ten.

Twelve.

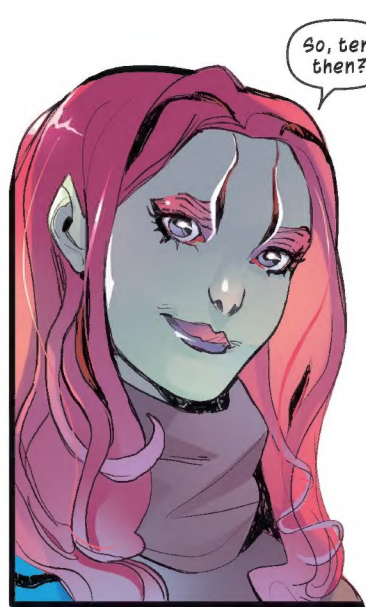
Ten.



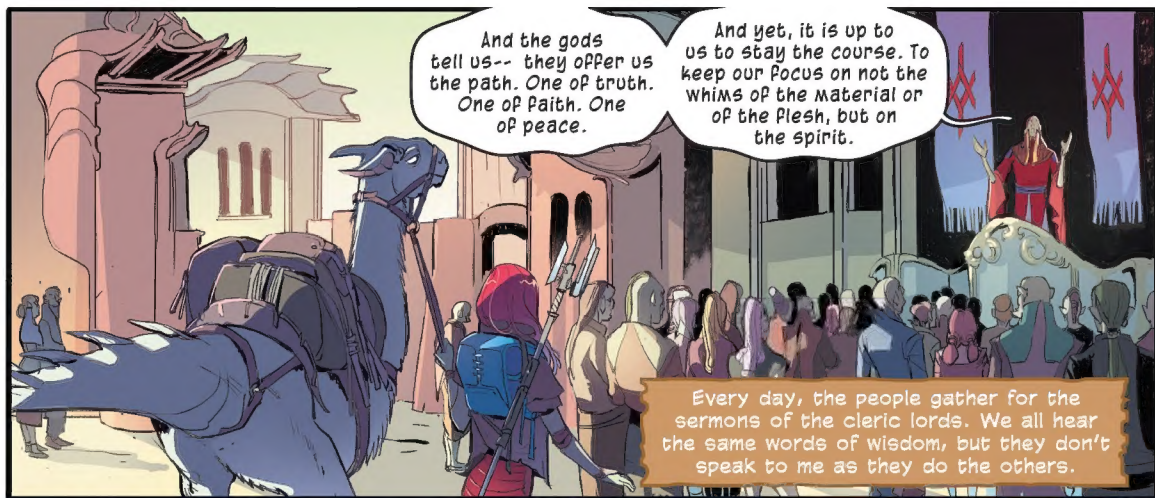
You know, your ugly glare isn't intimidating me, Jaro.

Not at all.

Eight.



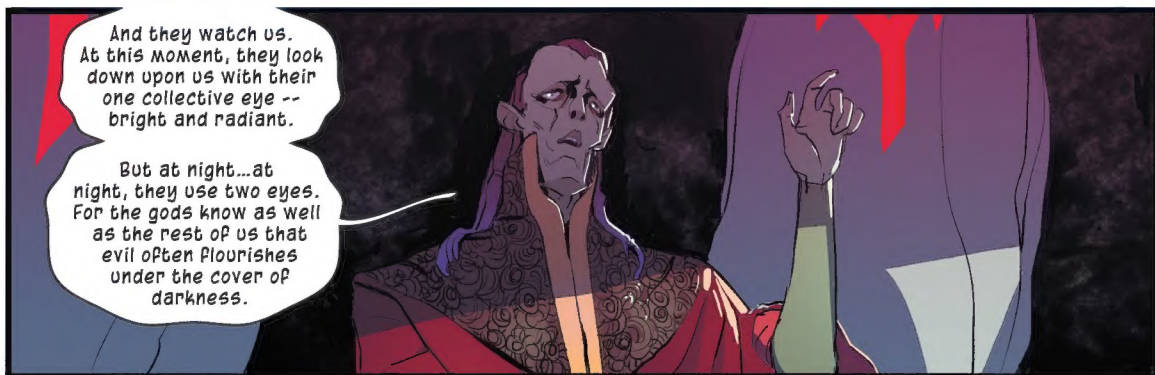
So, ten, then?



And the gods tell us-- they offer us the path. One of truth. One of faith. One of peace.

And yet, it is up to us to stay the course. To keep our focus on not the whims of the material or of the flesh, but on the spirit.

Every day, the people gather for the sermons of the cleric lords. We all hear the same words of wisdom, but they don't speak to me as they do the others.



And they watch us. At this moment, they look down upon us with their one collective eye -- bright and radiant.

But at night...at night, they use two eyes. For the gods know as well as the rest of us that evil often flourishes under the cover of darkness.



That is where we must keep a closer watch. On the shadows.

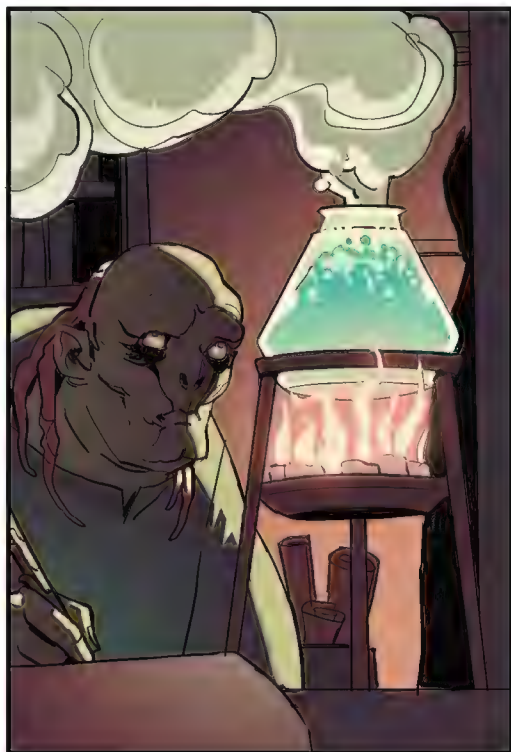
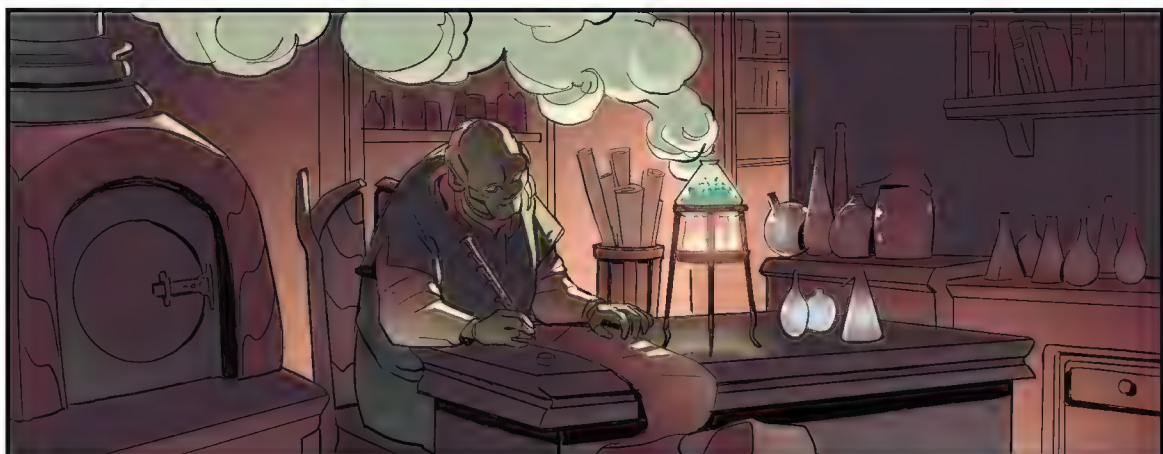


Can't begrudge them, I suppose.

Some people need something to look up to. Something to inspire them. Something to believe in.









What are you doing here?

Our duty as the Akolouth. Upholding the laws of the temple.

Did you think you could hide away here in solitude and defy the gods? Did you think your transgressions would go unnoticed?



I do not care for your laws, nor the way you use them as means of power.

To intimidate.

To control.

To rule.

We are not rulers. We are but humble servants. That is our station in life. We accept that we are merely descendants of the gods, not the gods themselves.

It is heretics like you that act as gods. Taking what nature provided and defiling it. Forcing it to bend to your will.

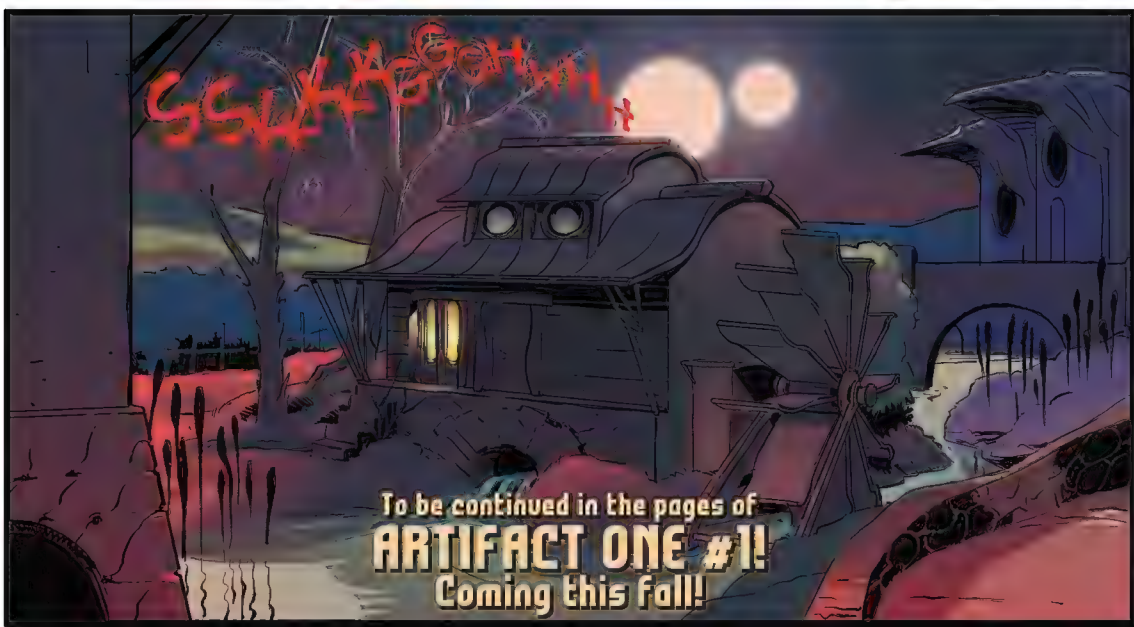
These things you make, these words you write, they are blasphemous. They are poison.

As are you, old man.

How? What harm could I cause? I only seek knowledge.

I understand. But, what you should be searching for...

...is salvation.



To be continued in the pages of
ARTIFACT ONE #1!
Coming this fall!



VOL. 1

ARTIFACT ALONE

#1

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#1

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Issue One

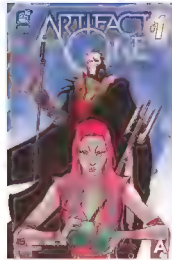
"FIELD OF VISION"

created and written by:
J.T. KRUL **Vince HERNANDEZ**

with Illustrations by:
Romina MORANELLI

lettering by:
Dez SIENTY

editing by:
Gabe CARRASCO



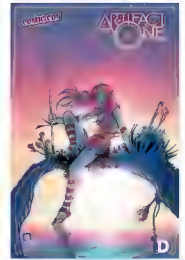
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The planet
Adenia.

What
do you
see?

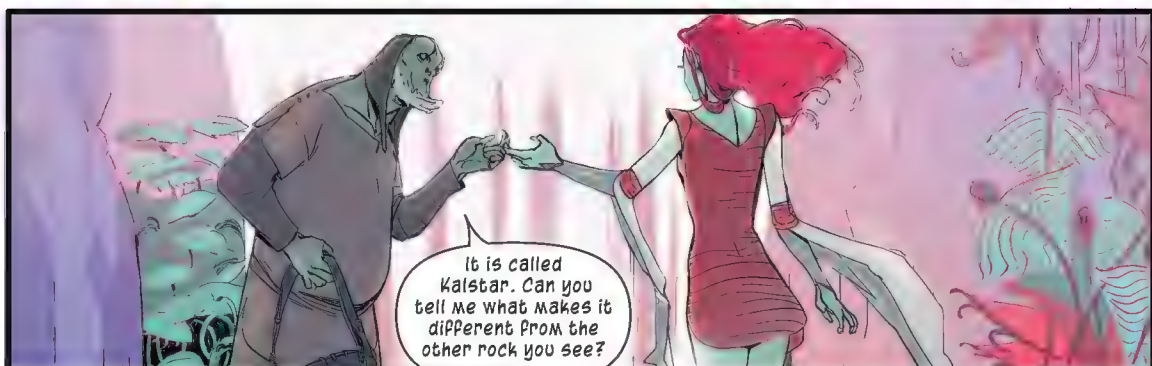
Utin -
Elder of Adenia.
God of the Mountains
and the lands. Strong
as the rock. Rich as
the soil. Shaper
of worlds.

In our world's
earliest stage, Utin
reached up from the
ground, using his hands
of fire to carve out the
hills and valleys and
form the mountains
far and wide.





A wonderful tale, Remi, but I am not looking for story time. I am more interested in the physical characteristics.



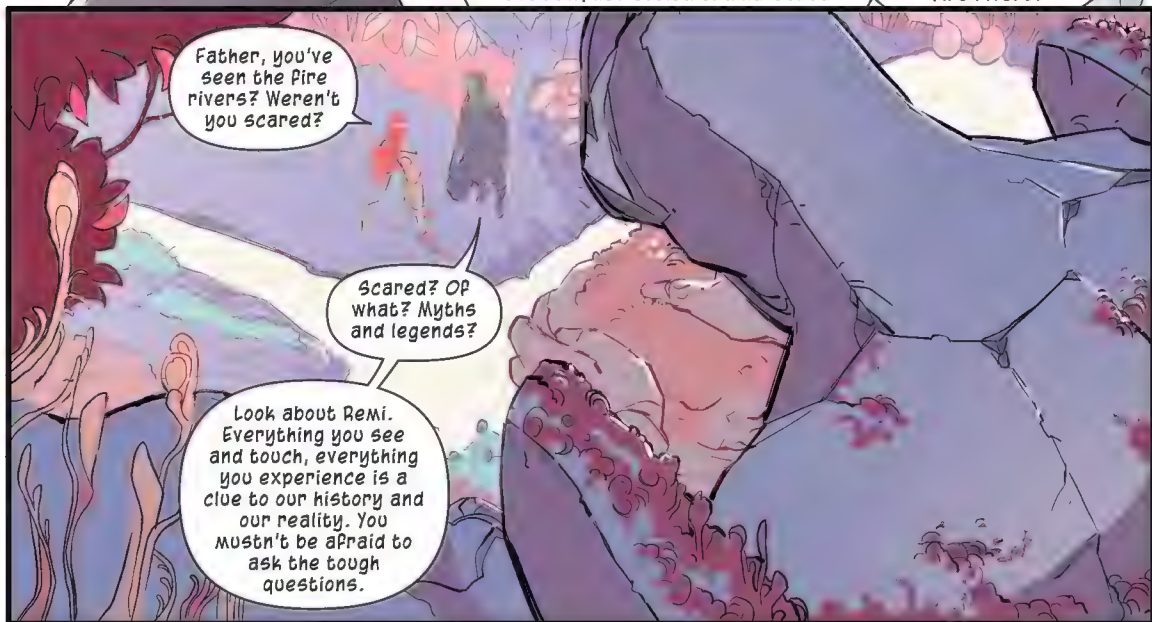
It is called Kalstar. Can you tell me what makes it different from the other rock you see?



It is harder, more dense. With tiny crystal flecks about it. From heat?

Very good. Yes. It has been crystalized and beyond. Charred, as if it was once blazing hot. Molten even. But now, has cooled and hardened.

You can find Kalstar near the fissures of fire rivers.

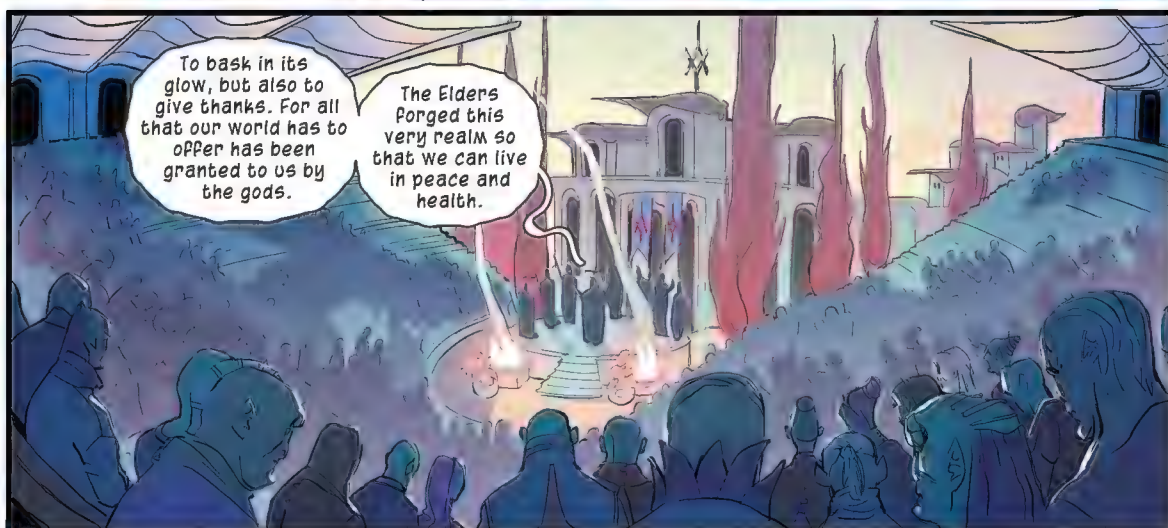


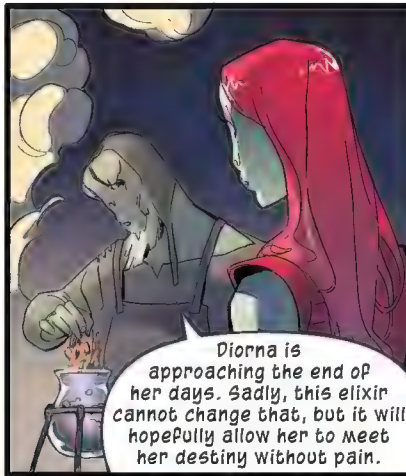
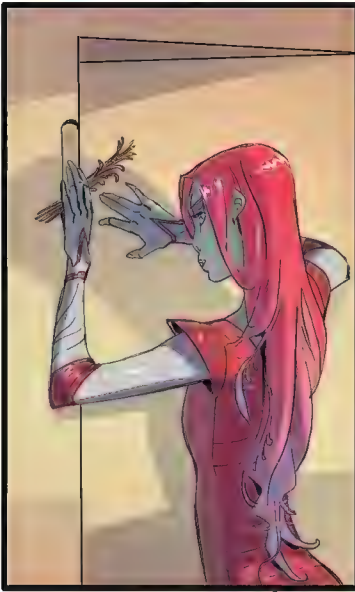
Father, you've seen the fire rivers? Weren't you scared?

Scared? Of what? Myths and legends?

Look about Remi. Everything you see and touch, everything you experience is a clue to our history and our reality. You mustn't be afraid to ask the tough questions.









Later.



Dawah! You came.

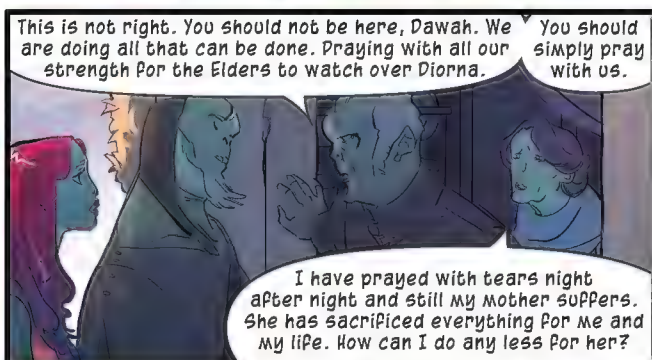
Of course. I said I would. In many ways, my word is all I have, so I tend to keep it as close to me as possible.

Tell me, how is Diorna?



It was a difficult one last night, I am afraid. Her pain is great.

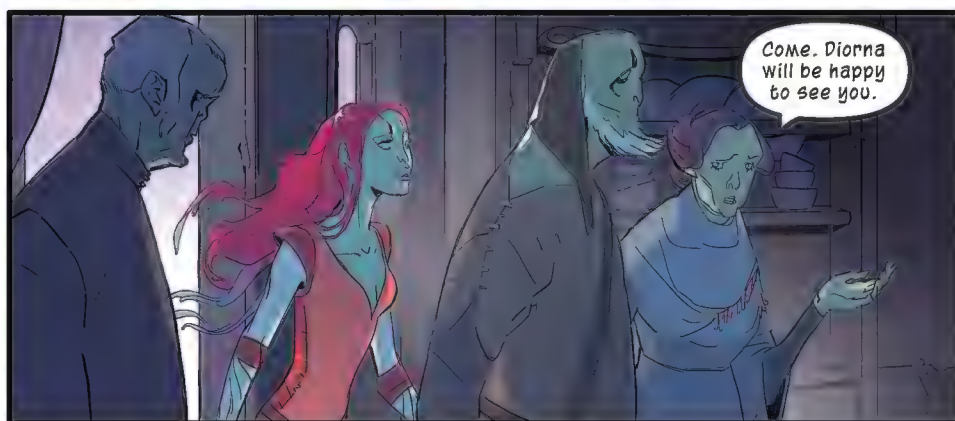
Well, let us see if we can do something for her.



This is not right. You should not be here, Dawah. We are doing all that can be done. Praying with all our strength for the Elders to watch over Diorna.

You should simply pray with us.

I have prayed with tears night after night and still my mother suffers. She has sacrificed everything for me and my life. How can I do any less for her?



Come. Diorna will be happy to see you.

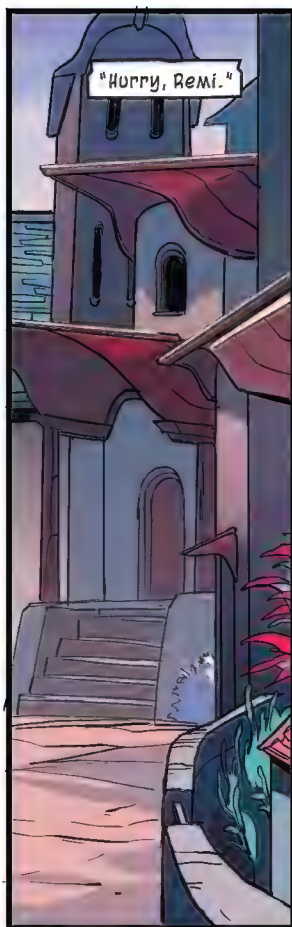




Heretics!







"Hurry, Remi."



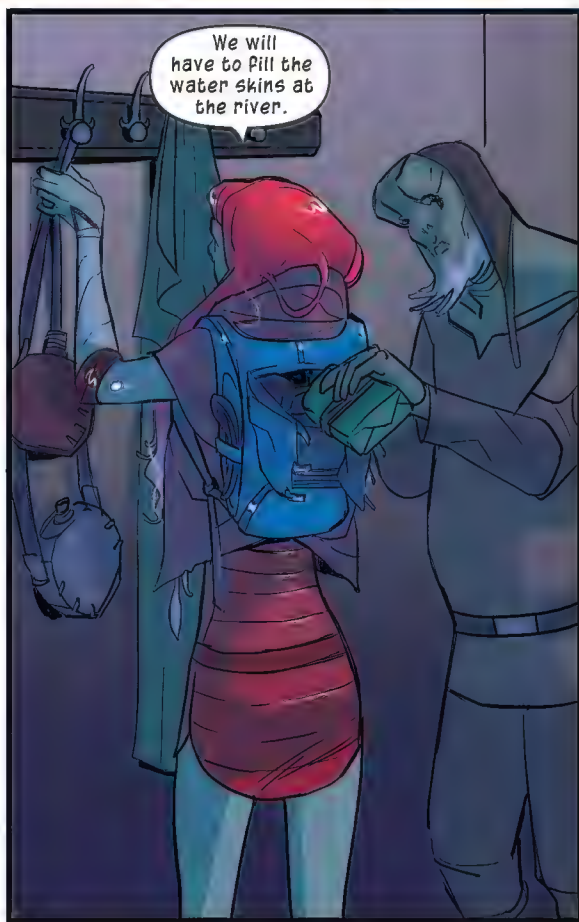
They'll be here soon.

Pack light.
Only the most vital necessities.

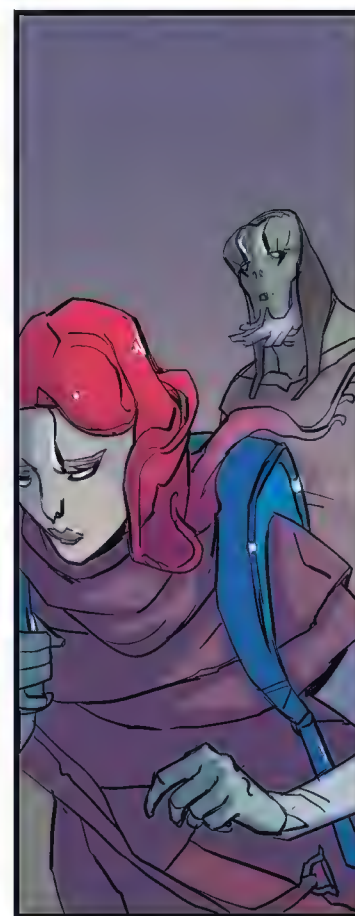
What happened?

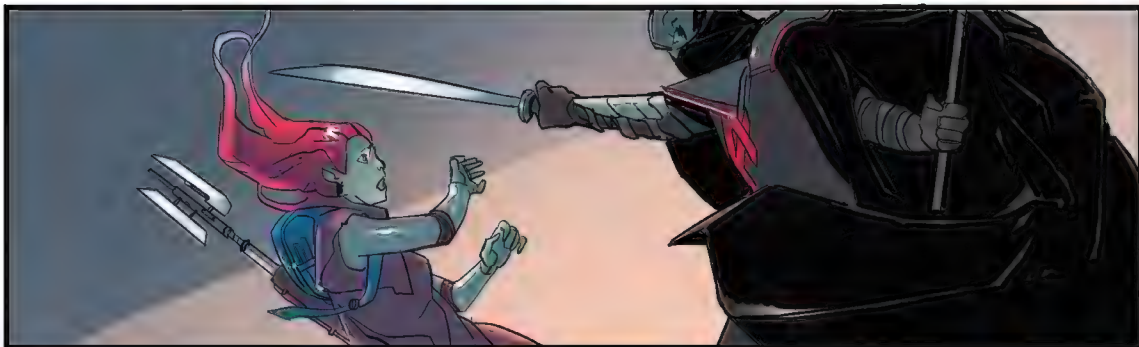


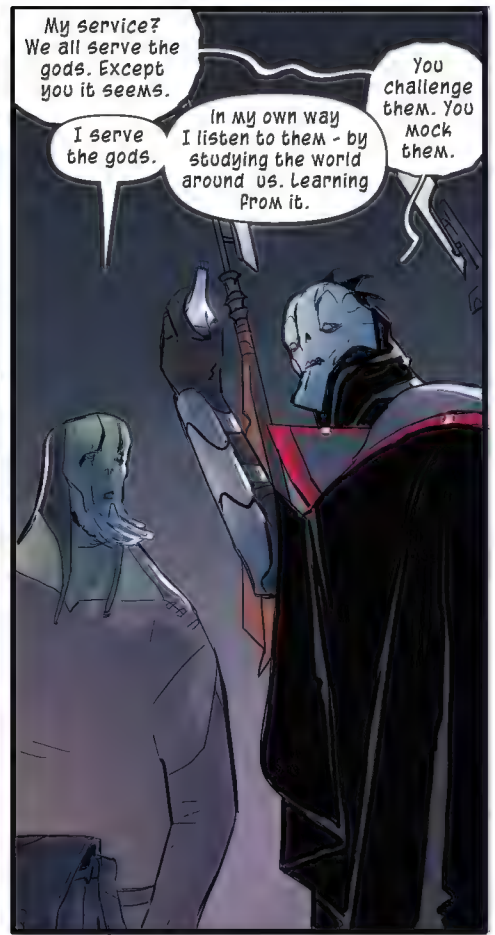
The inevitable.

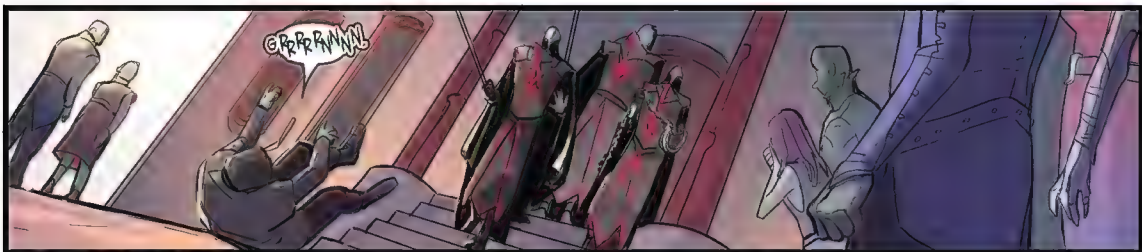


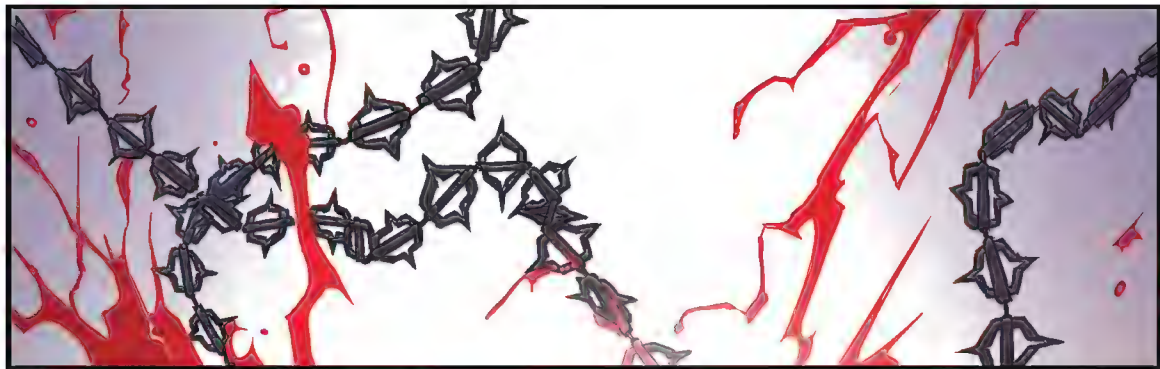
We will have to fill the water skins at the river.

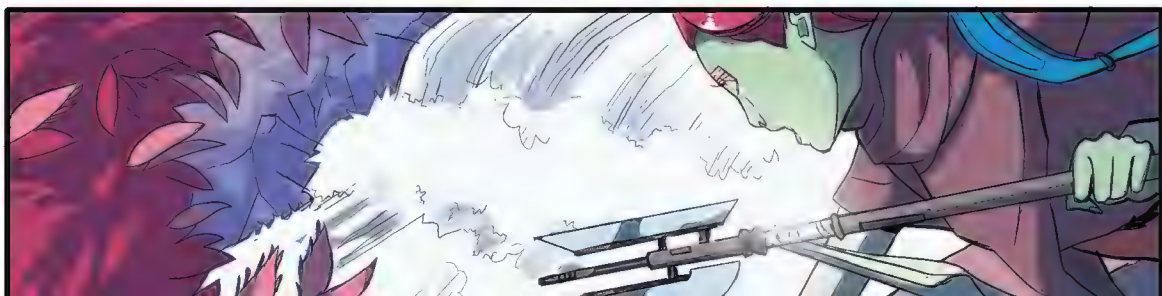
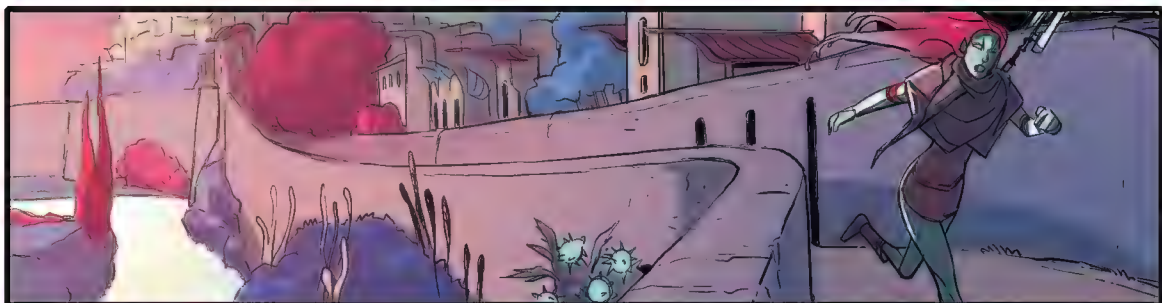
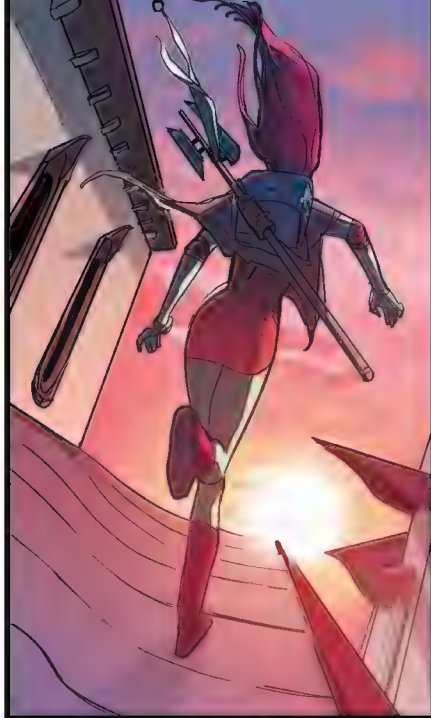


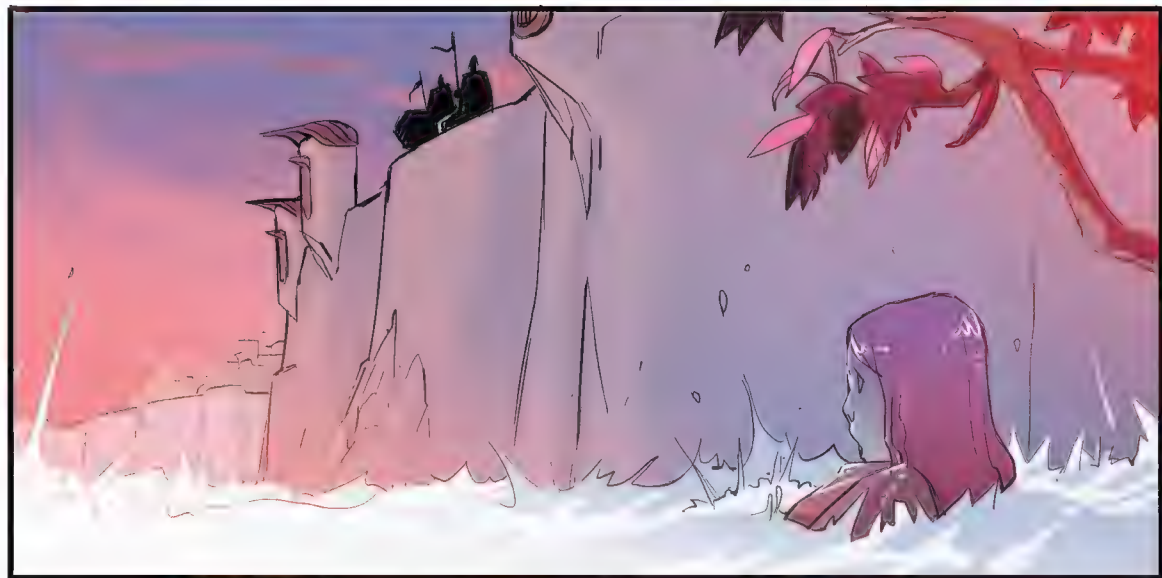








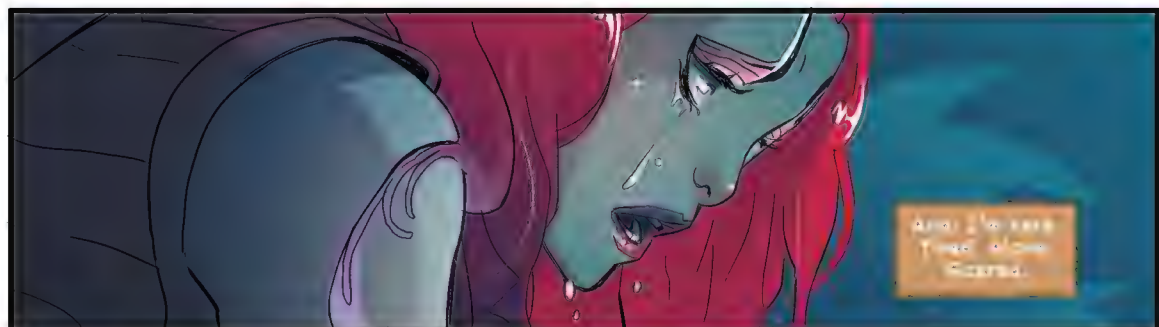




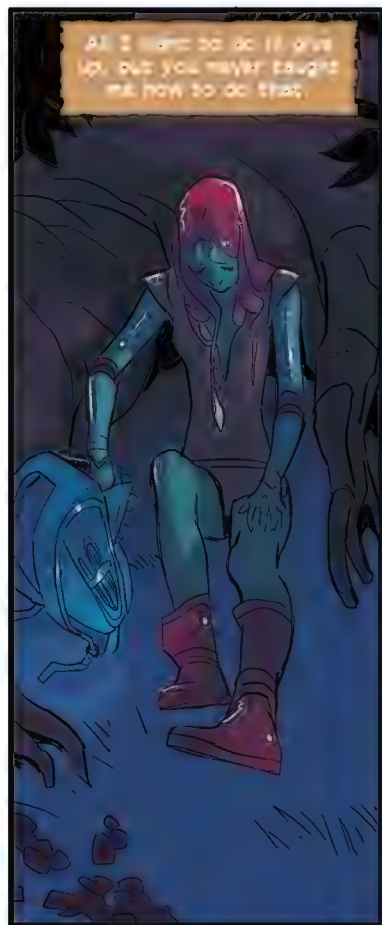


Everything I wanted
in this world, I wanted
from you, father.

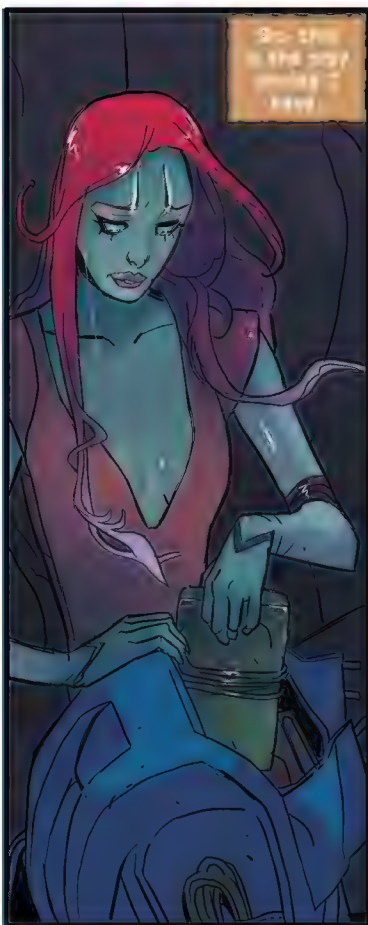
Now, you're gone.



And I've been
tried alone
before.



All I want to do is give
up, but you never taught
me how to do that.



So this
is the way
I live.



The way I've
lived.

Keep going

Keep searching

Keep searching



Look at the folder
for more info.



To be continued...



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Issue Two

“WHISPERS IN THE NIGHT”

The curious and adventurous relic hunter Remi, and her father, Dawah, lived on the edge of a blade in a constant balance between their secret life of discovery and a hierarchy that disavowed scientific knowledge in any form. Yet, that balance came crashing down in tragedy, as her father was brutally slain by the ruling power, The Akolouth. Now, Remi is left with only the relic left behind by her late father, a relic foreign to her in every way...

created and written by:

J.T. KRUL **Vince HERNANDEZ**

Illustrations by:

Romina MORANELLI

with colors by:

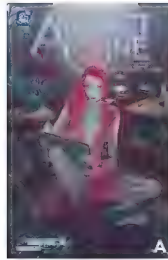
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No matter how hard I try to keep the notes in this chronicle entirely... objective, focused on the facts of what I have discovered during my journey, they often end up becoming more personal.

I miss you, father.



I have done everything I can to put both time and distance between me and Kaladon and the day you died. Or rather, the day you were executed at the hands of Akolouth. In the names of the gods.

See, I strive for accuracy in my accounts, just as you would insist.

The truth. Always the truth.



You instilled that burning desire in me, a curiosity without boundaries.

And that has brought me a long way, but part of me would gladly give it all up to have you back again.





For this has proved to be a lonely road.

I had hoped the reach of the clerics was limited to Kaladon and the surrounding regions, but their influence has spread like a pestilence across this entire realm.



Kaladon



Caladon

• Caladon

• Caladon

Caladon



However, this world is bigger than them. Bigger than their lies.

I have seen it.



I have encountered many new elements during my exploration, and have yet to come across any that match that which the artifact is made of. The nature of its composition remains as much a mystery as the strange symbol upon it.



Caladon

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Caladon



But, I continue on. And although you are not here physically, your memory serves as a guide. Your words a path.

In order to find the answers, you would say, "You have to look in the most unexpected places. Keep your eyes open."

"And your ears."

That is all I'm trying to say. Time has changed us.

We are not that different from this ale. The hoggan and bronis harvested from the fields is no longer in its original form. It has changed. Just as we have changed.

Pipe down, already.

No, no. I agree. Elgrove has changed. He is more ale than man at this point.

HAHAHAHA!

How do you folks ever plan to get where you are going if you do not see where you have been?

HAHAHAHA!

What, you think the gods created our towns and cities out of thin air?

Placed us here like setting pieces on a game board? Nonsense.

There must have been a time we lived more primitively. We progressed. Evolved. We were cave dwellers I tell you. Animals.

I've seen the signs scratched upon the walls of history.



Remi! These dishes are not going to clean themselves.



True, Tolin. It is about as likely to happen as you cleaning them.

If your feet moved as quickly as your mouth, I would pay you double.



The market is in a frenzy, today.

A single bushel, Amara? We need two at least.

You should have seen it, Pather. I was lucky to get back with just the one.

Well, get them to your mother in the kitchen, so she can get the pies baked and cooled in time for tonight's celebration.



Every year, the Festival of the Plentiful seems to grow in size and splendor. Remi, did your village do anything special to commemorate Nor Tullivo?

Not much that I can remember.

Well, I think you will like it. Food is never better. And music, too. Maybe, we could share a dance?

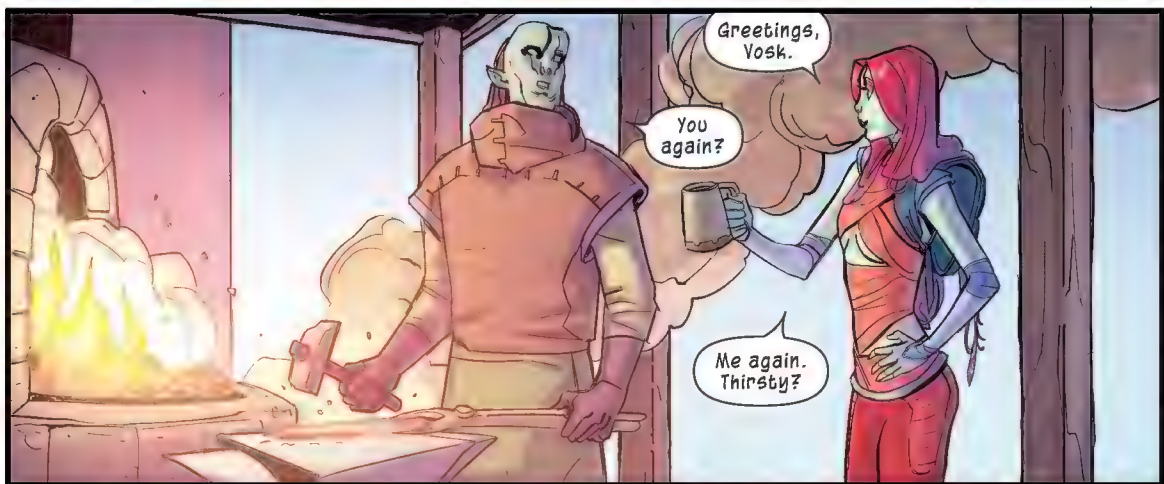
Thank you, Amara, but I will not be attending.

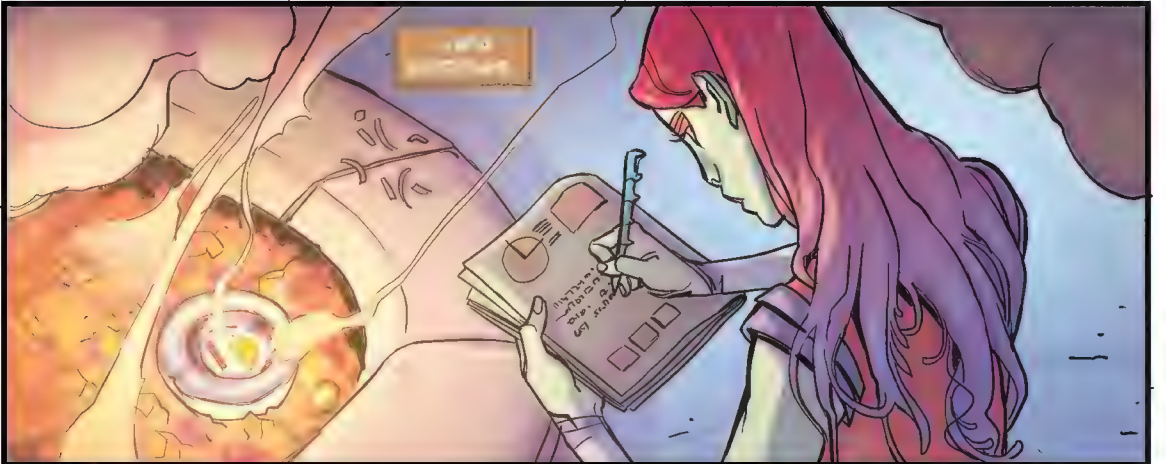
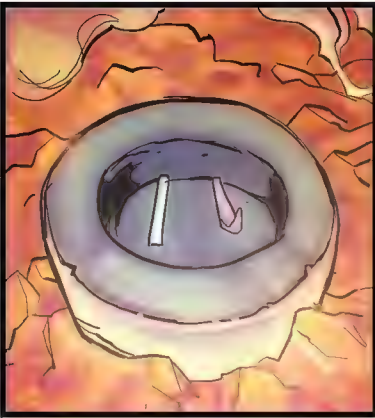
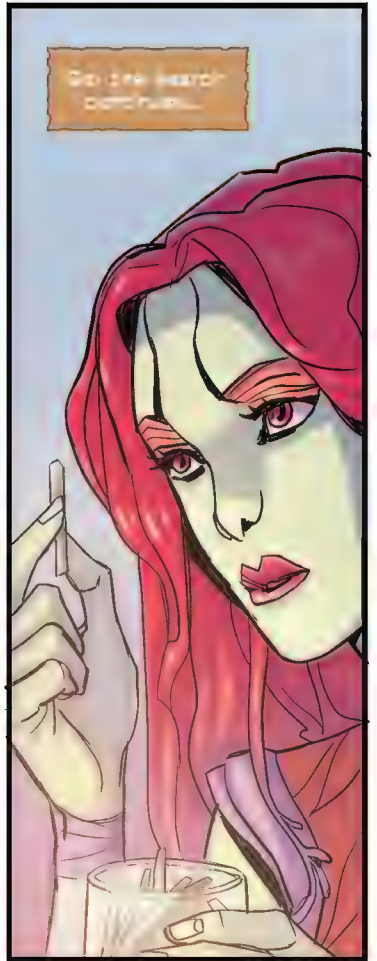
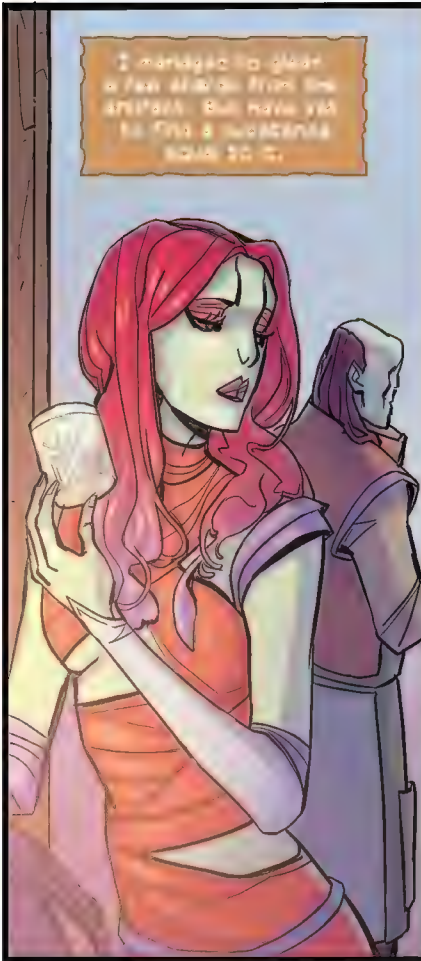
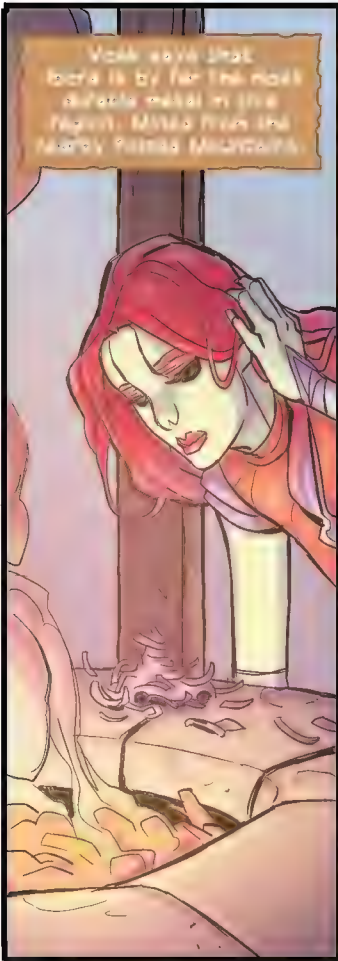


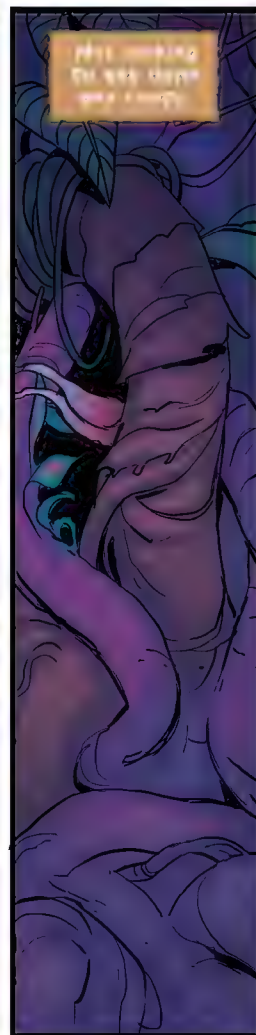
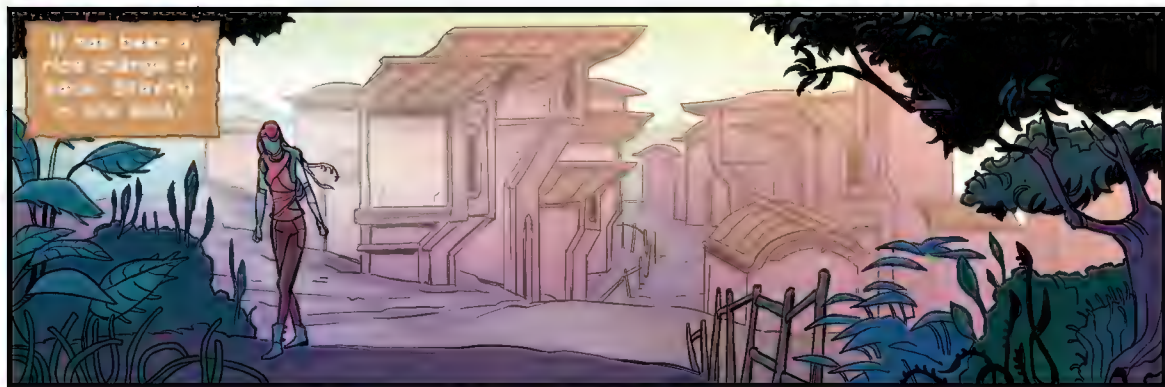
Not attending?!? You have only been with us for a short time, Remi, but Nor Tullivo is one of our busiest nights of the year. I need you.

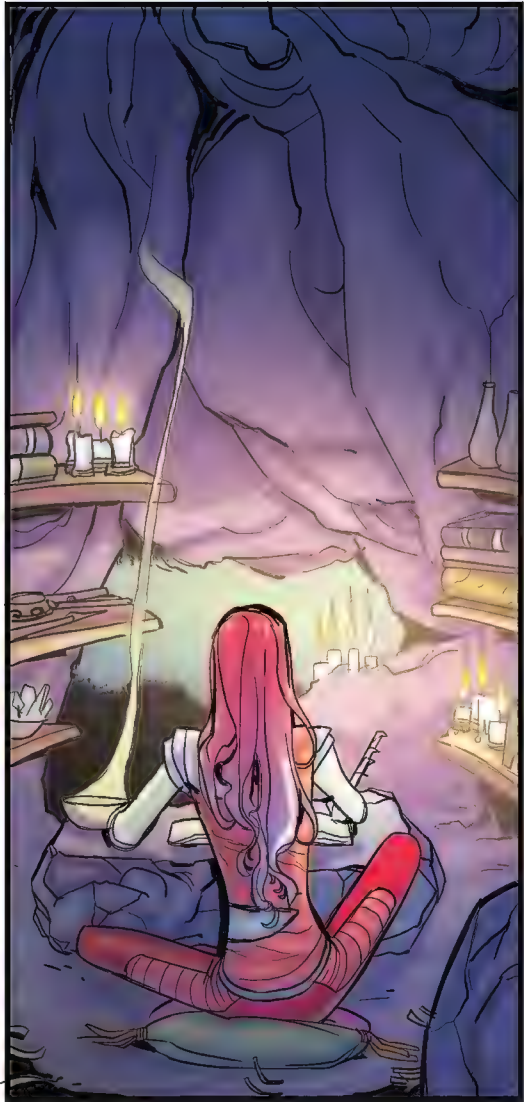


Sorry, Tolin. But, my Pather would not approve.





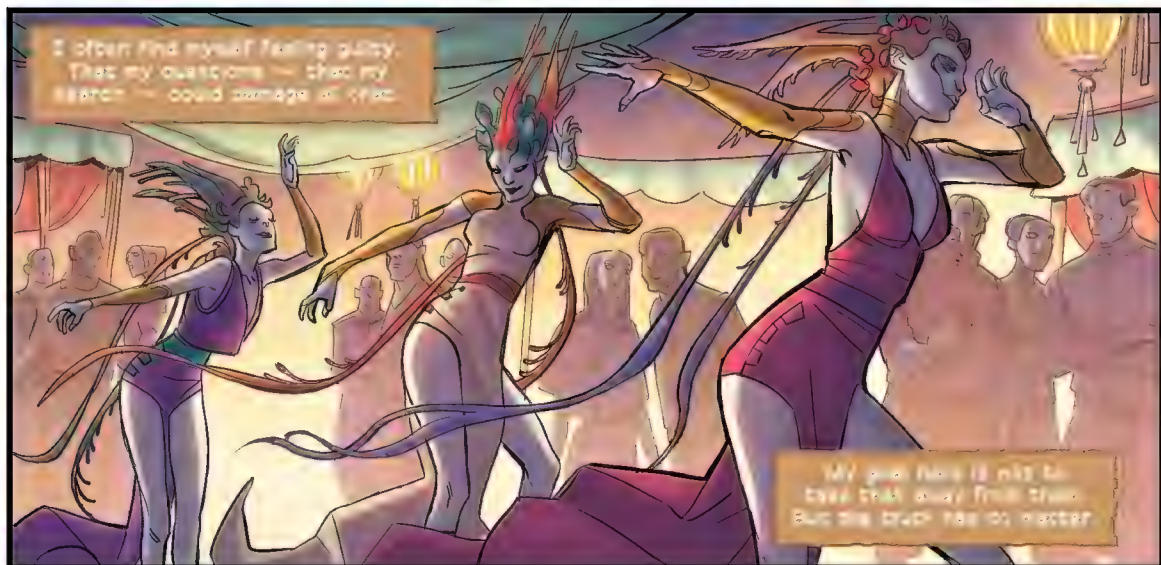
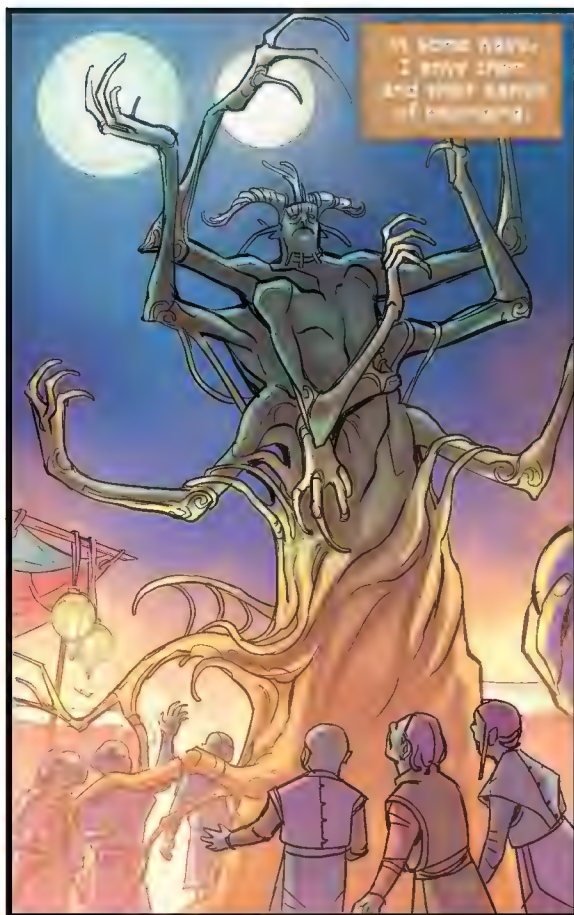




In my brief time here, I have
seen so many things in this
country. In many ways, they
are like the people of Kalabari.

Living their lives, raising their
families, searching for prosperity.







Quite the sight, eh?

Impressive craftsmanship.

Beautiful detail.



Yes, yes. Lot of love went into making it.

The artist chose the perfect structure to convey this story. A lie upon a lie upon a lie.

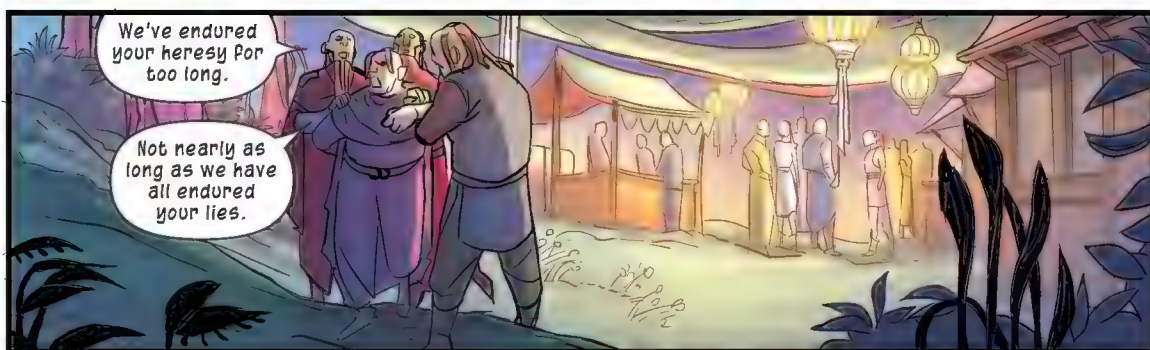


All stacked up, nice and neat!



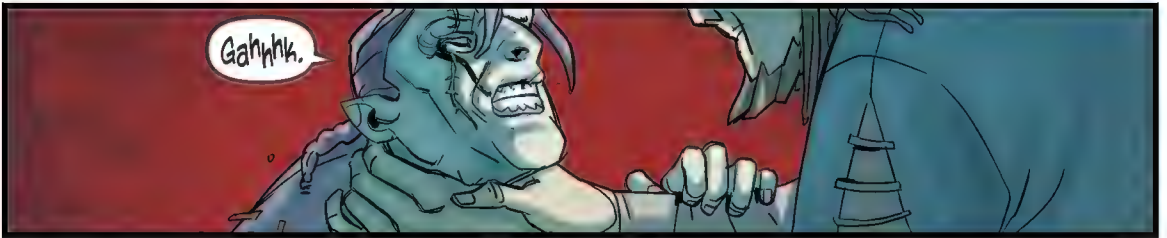
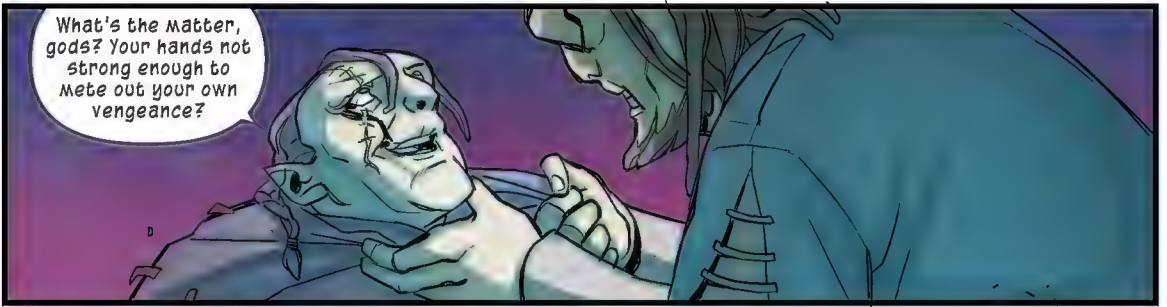
That took me months to carve.

Enough, Elgrove!

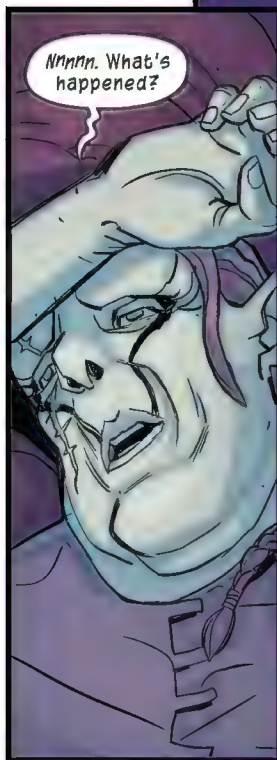


We've endured your heresy for too long.

Not nearly as long as we have all endured your lies.







Nnnn. What's happened?



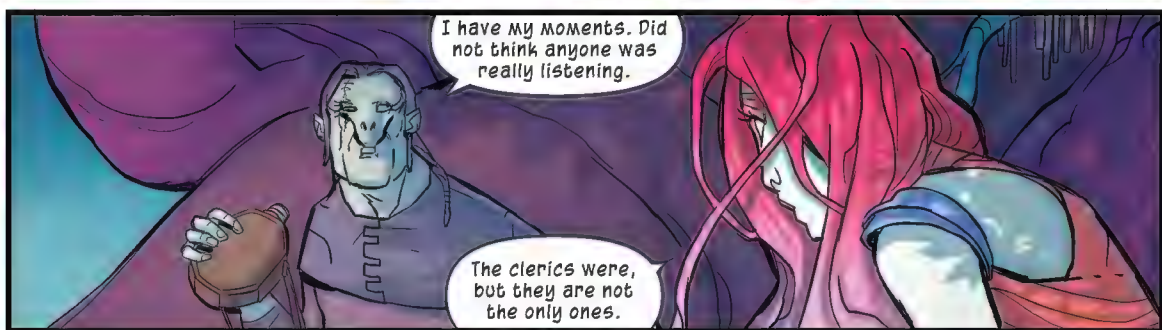
Drink water. It will help.

My head is throbbing.



You passed out.

Knew it was only a matter of time before your ramblings got you in trouble. Have you always been so outspoken?



I have my moments. Did not think anyone was really listening.

The clerics were, but they are not the only ones.



Tell me, the images you talked about. The cave paintings? Are they real?

Indeed, they are.

Show me.



Have not been back here in years. I don't even know if I can find it again.

My legs will probably give out before we get half way there.

Passageway could have caved in by now. Could be a dead-end.

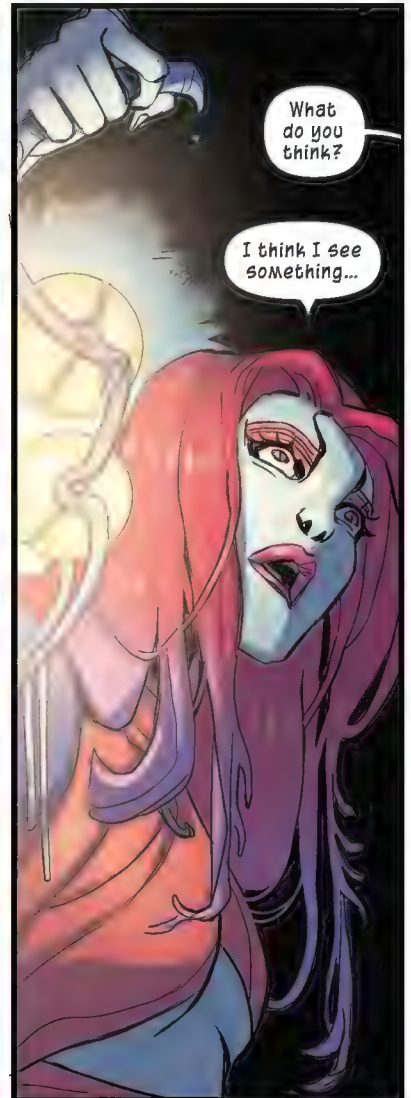


Your reluctance seems to be growing, Elgrove.

I am not the man I used to be, and the wild can be a dangerous place.



Especially in the dark.







GRRRGGGGRRRR



To be continued ...



aspen
comics

Vol. 1

ARTIFACT

AONE

#3

OF 4
COVER A

J.T. Krul • Vince Hernandez
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Vol. 1

ARTIFACT AONE

#3

OF 4
COVER B

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Issue Three

“EYE OPENING”

Remi was forced from the confines of her life and home, or suffer the same fate as her murdered father. However, the perils of fleeing did not dissuade her inquisitive nature, as she continued to study the precious artifact previously given to her by her late father. But, danger was still ever present outside of Kaladon, and her newfound ally Elgrove pushed their research too far into unfamiliar territory—attracting a dangerous foe unknown to them...

created and written by:

J.T. KRUL **Vince HERNANDEZ**

Illustrations by:

Romina MORANELLI

with colors by:

Enrica Eren ANGIOLINI

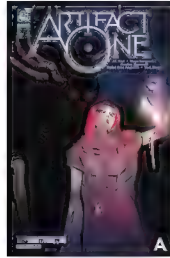
flats by: Cassandra Peirano & Sheena Marie B. Bofill

lettering by:

Dezi SIENTY

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Gabe CARRASCO



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Direct Edition
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ARTIFACT ONE created by J.T. Krul and Vince Hernandez

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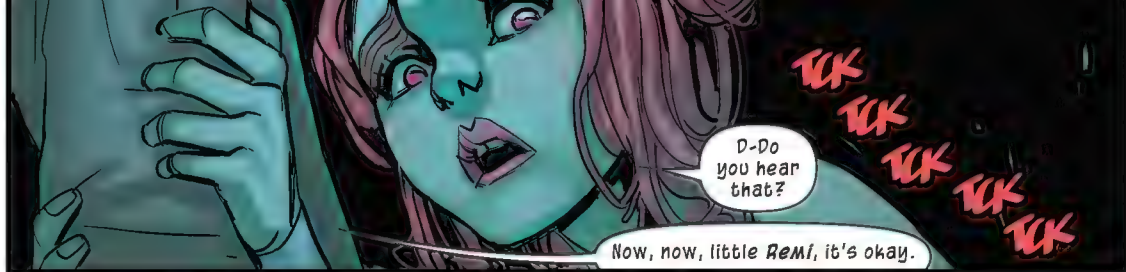
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D-Do you hear that?

Now, now, little Remi, it's okay.

TCK
TCK
TCK
TCK
TCK



You needn't automatically be scared of something just because you cannot see it.

What is it?

This world is teeming with life. In every mountain and valley. Every lake and river. Every nook and cranny. Above ground and below.

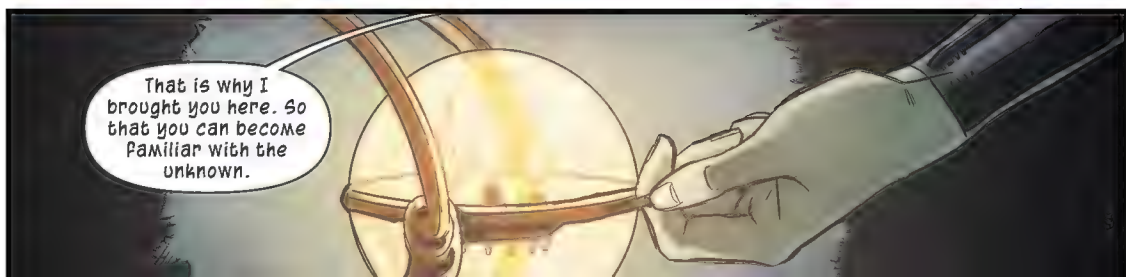
TCK
TCK
TCK



We easily are accustomed to whichever part of the world we are born to. That environment becomes comforting to us. Safe.



Likewise, whatever we encounter that is most foreign to us or strange fills us with unease.



That is why I brought you here. So that you can become familiar with the unknown.

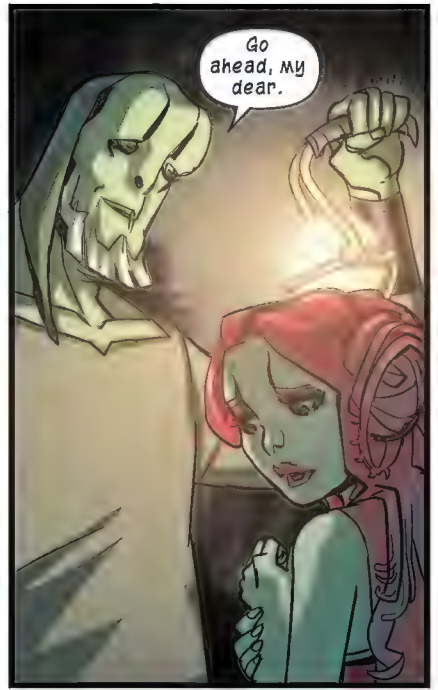


So that you can
learn that simply
because something lives
in the darkness--that
does not mean it is
dangerous.



If you look closely and observe, you will see that they act not that different from those creatures we keep as pets, Remi.

Approaching us with that same sense of curiosity.



Go ahead, my dear.



It...it tickles.

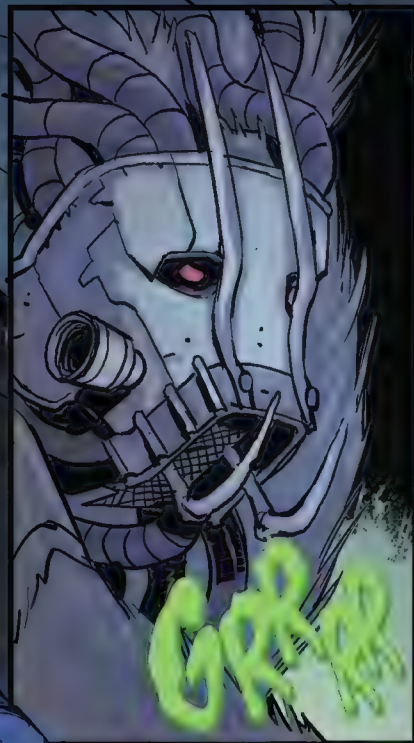
See. Nothing to be scared of.

Of course, there are things in this world that can mean you harm. Not all life on this world will treat you with such benevolence.

The trick is learning to tell the difference...

"...And react accordingly."

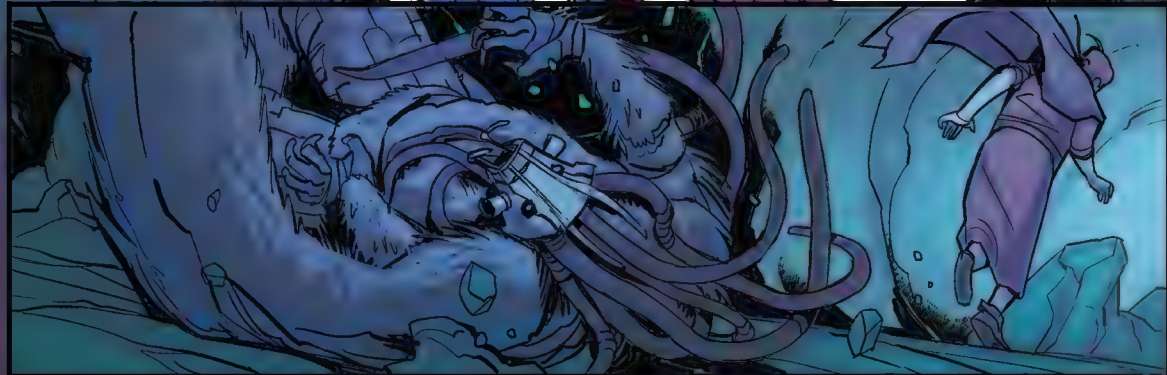
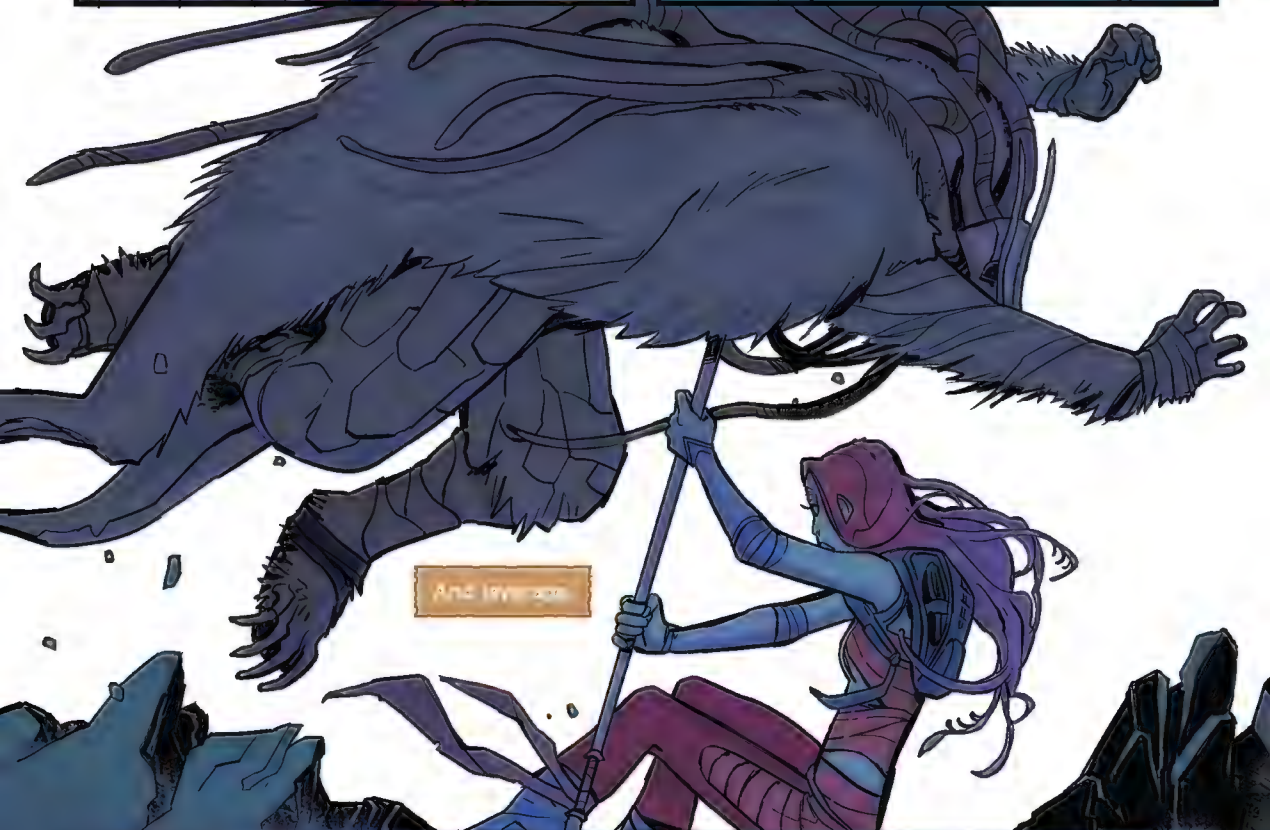
RUN!

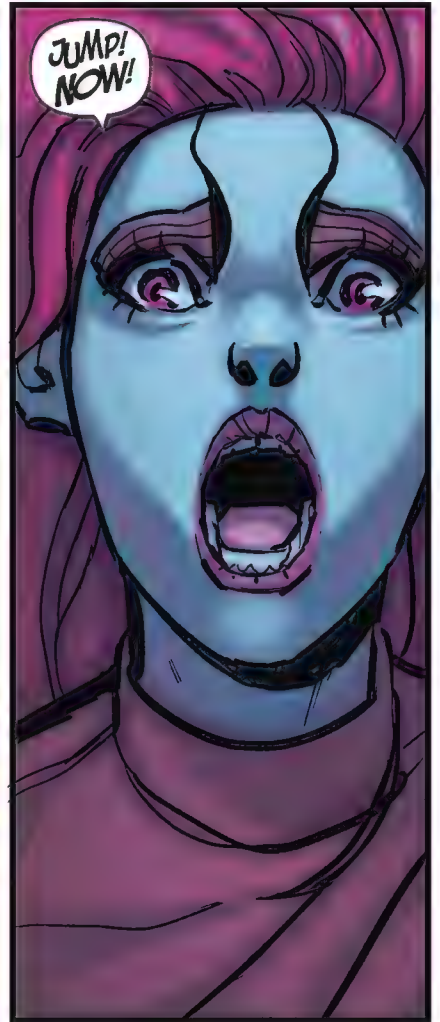


Come on! Faster, Elgrove!

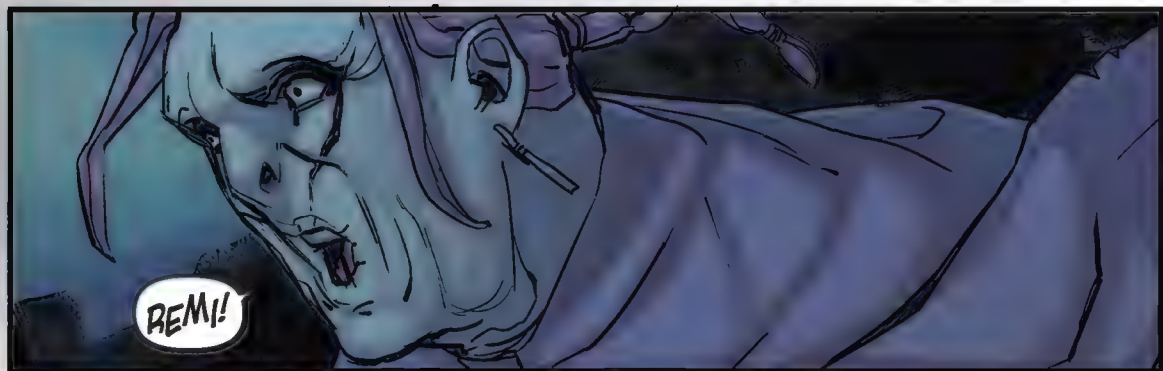
I'm trying, Remi. I'm trying.

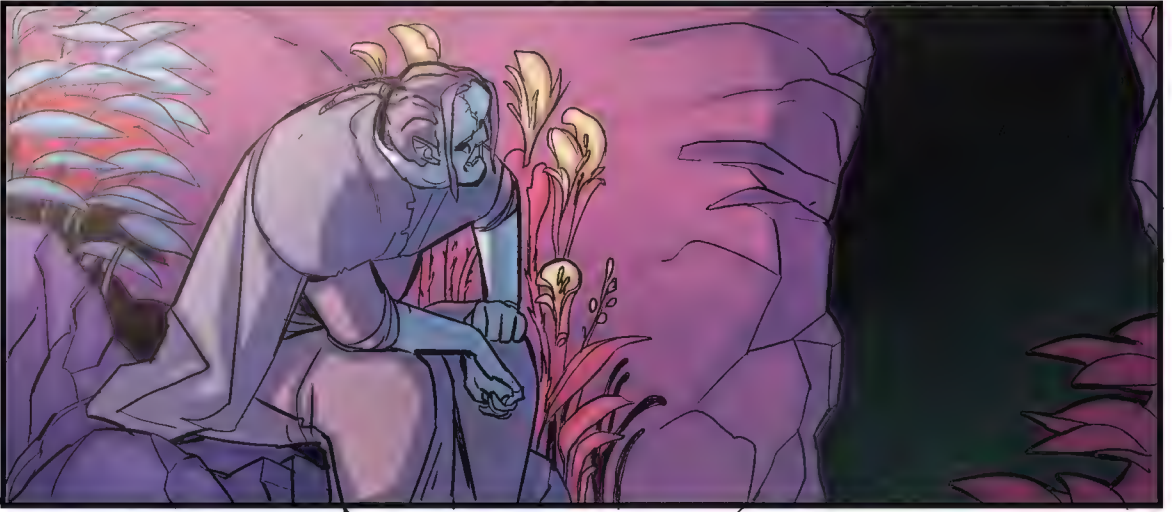
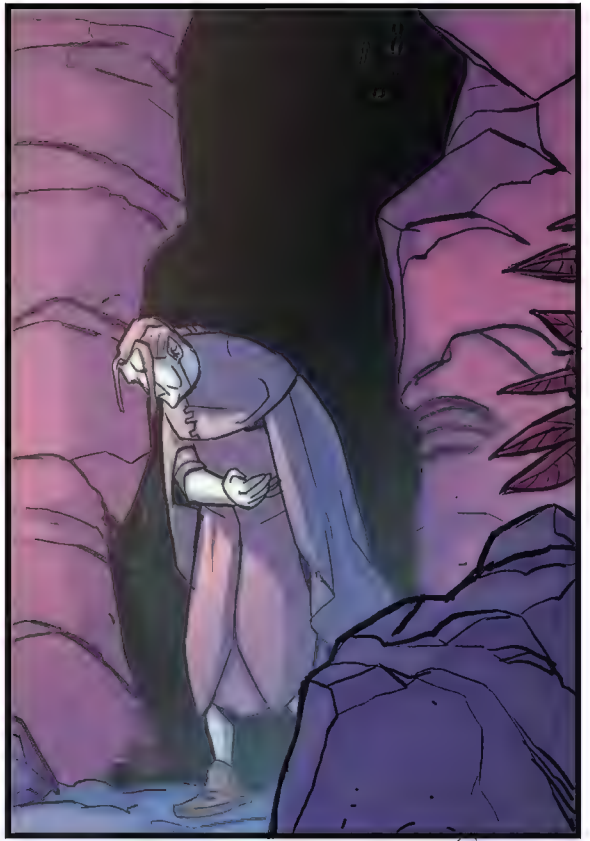
This is a very fast. I should never have let Elgrove take the red book without covers. Should have had him draw me a map.

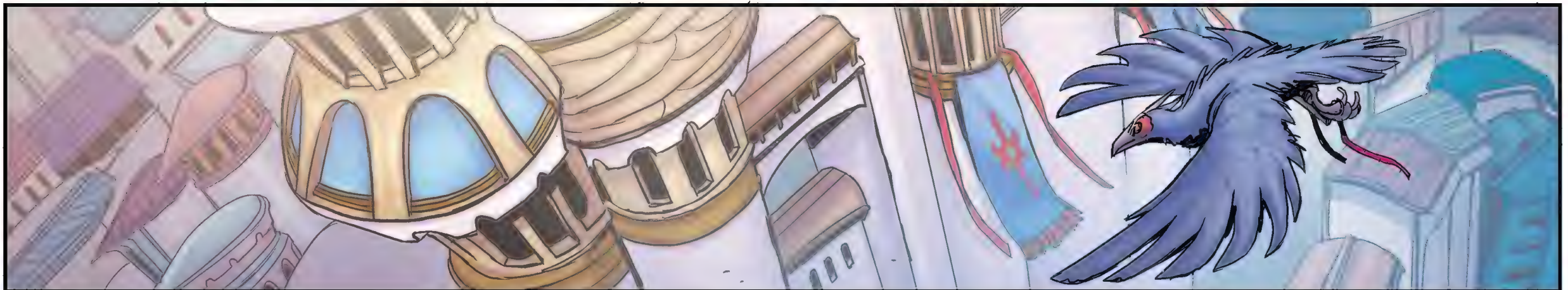
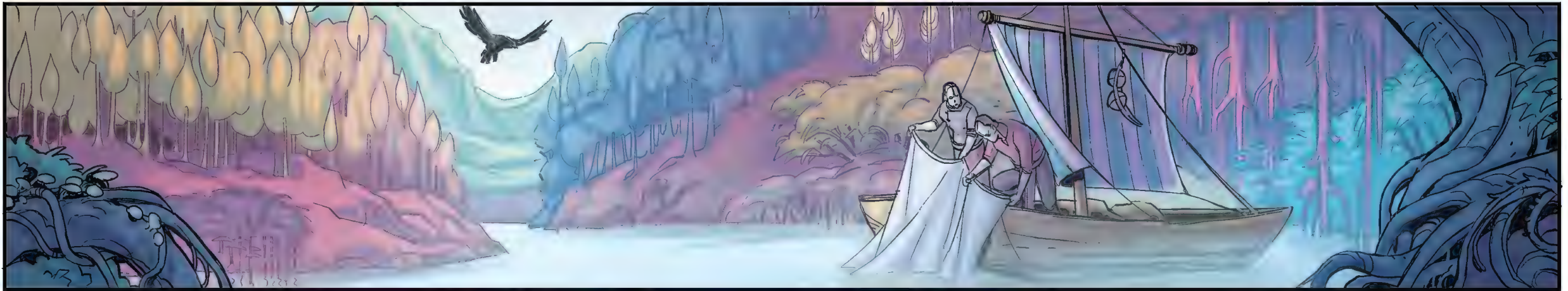


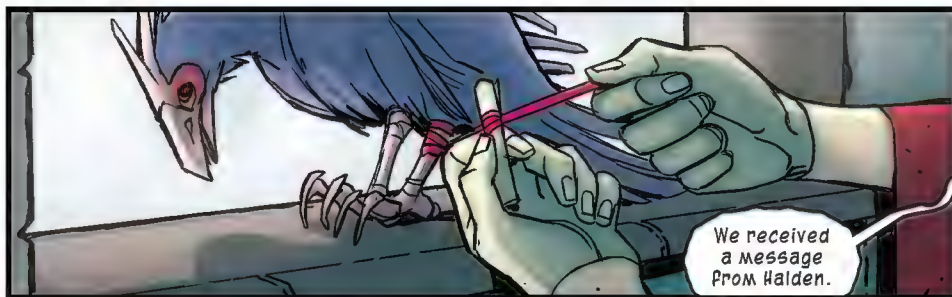










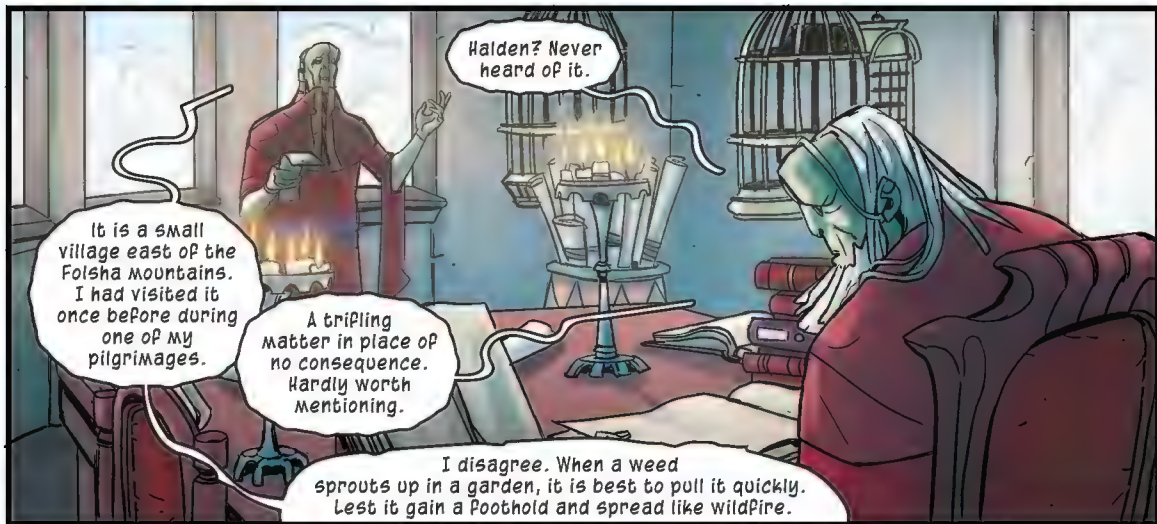


We received
a message
from Halden.



It seems there has been
an open act of aggression
against the temple.

Two individuals publicly decried
our gods on a celebratory
evening and attacked two of
our brothers.



Halden? Never
heard of it.

It is a small
village east of the
Folsha mountains.
I had visited it
once before during
one of my
pilgrimages.

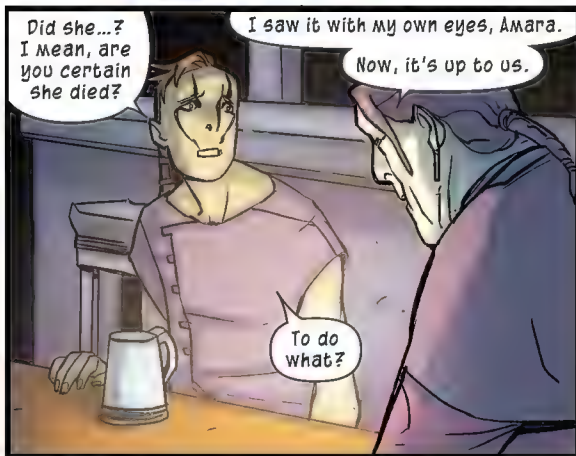
A trifling
matter in place of
no consequence.
Hardly worth
mentioning.

I disagree. When a weed
sprouts up in a garden, it is best to pull it quickly.
Lest it gain a foothold and spread like wildfire.



The same goes
for such resistance.
Better to snuff
it out now, rather than
let it fester and grow
into something
worse.



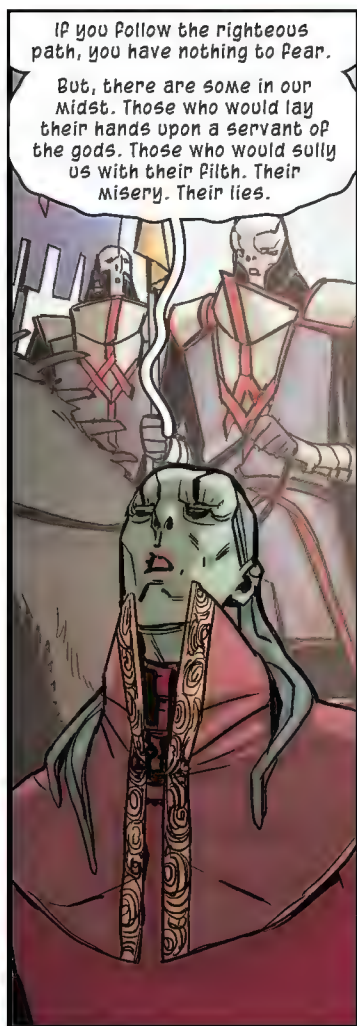


The following morning.





The Akolouth
do not come to
punish you. They
come to protect
you.

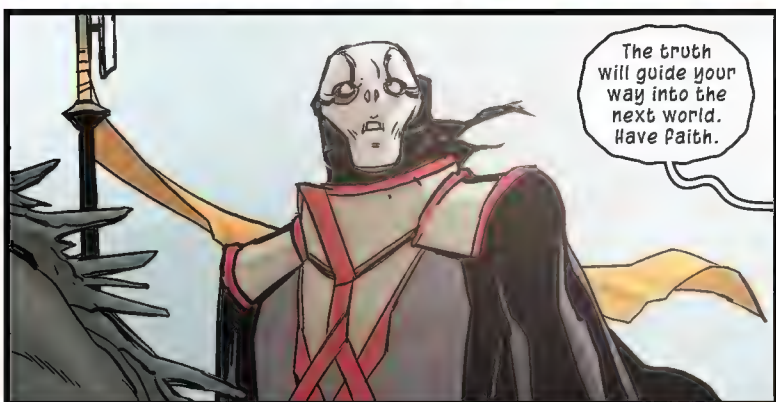


If you follow the righteous
path, you have nothing to fear.

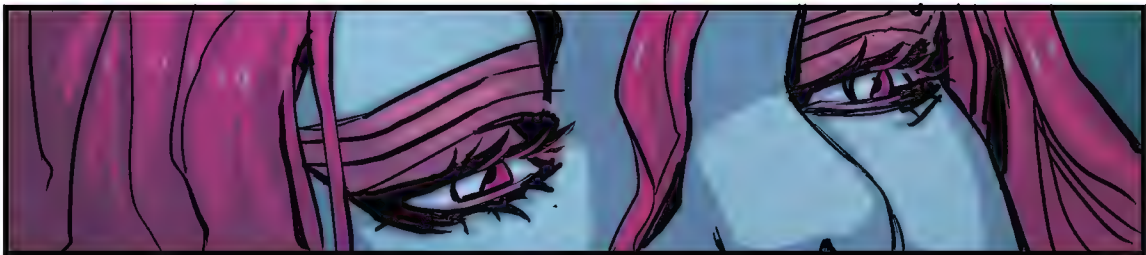
But, there are some in our
midst. Those who would lay
their hands upon a servant of
the gods. Those who would sully
us with their filth. Their
misery. Their lies.



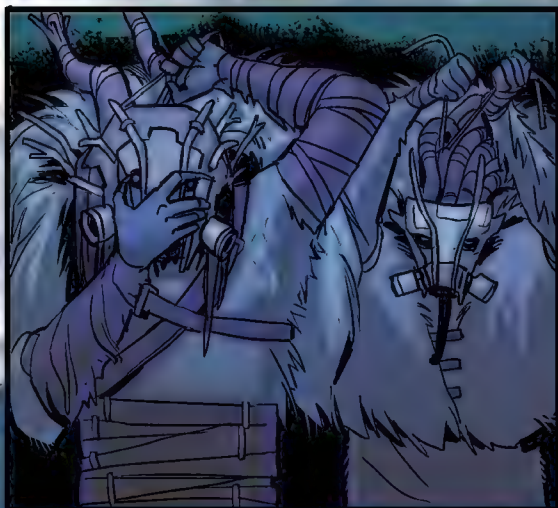
To those I
say, your days
of suffering in
the darkness
are coming to
an end.



The truth
will guide your
way into the
next world.
Have faith.









...are
you?

To be continued...



Vol. 1

ARTIFACT ZONE

#4

OF 4
COVER A

J.T. Krul • Vince Hernandez
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Issue Four

“UNSPOKEN TRUTH”

The continuing “open acts against the temple” forced the Akoulouth to step up their intimidation and dominance of the villages. However, Remi faced an even more sudden danger, as her and Elgrove encountered a species of beings that were unlike any they’ve ever seen. While Elgrove escaped in time, Remi was captured and brought before them, but the mysterious foes turned out to be something different altogether—humans...

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Dezi SIENTY

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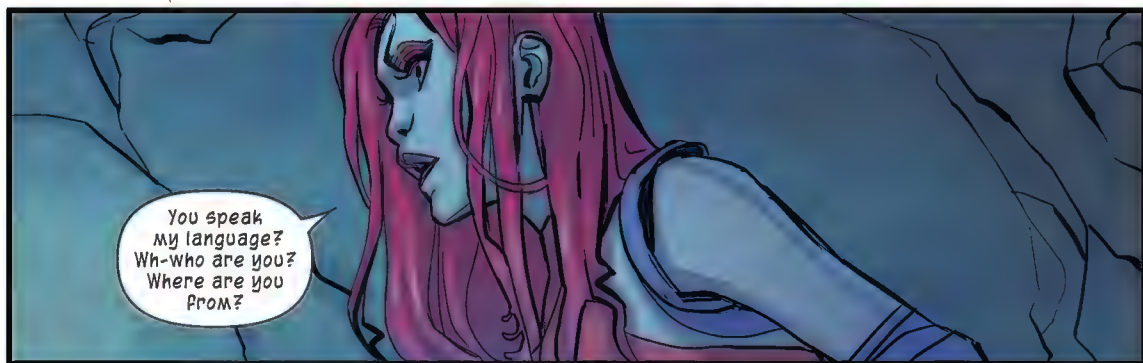
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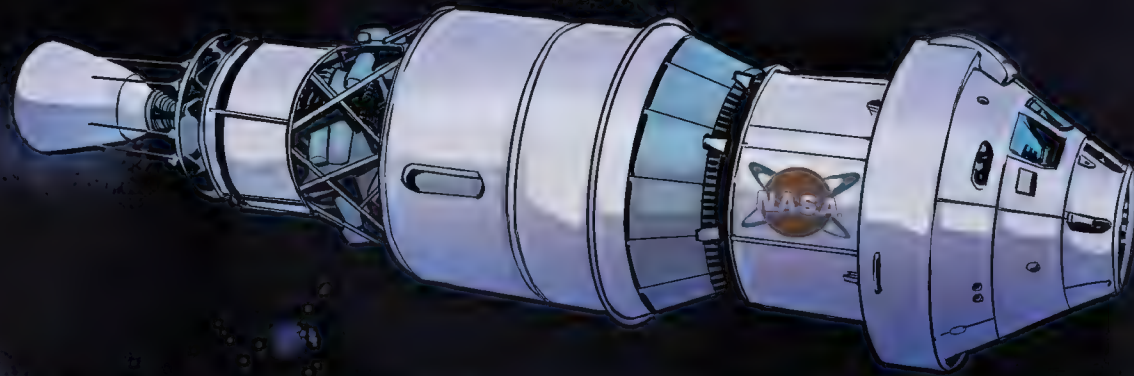
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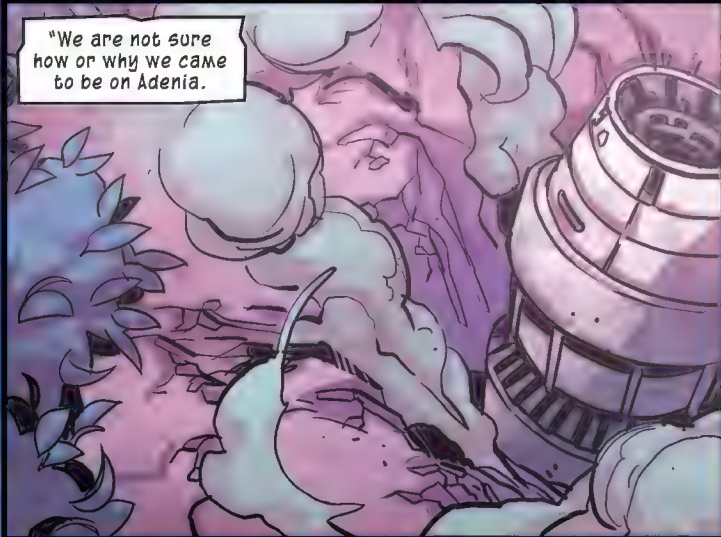
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"Descendants from
a forgotten world.
Sent into the farthest
reaches of space.



"We are not sure
how or why we came
to be on Adenia.



"But such
questions
seemed
secondary
to the main
objective.
Survival.



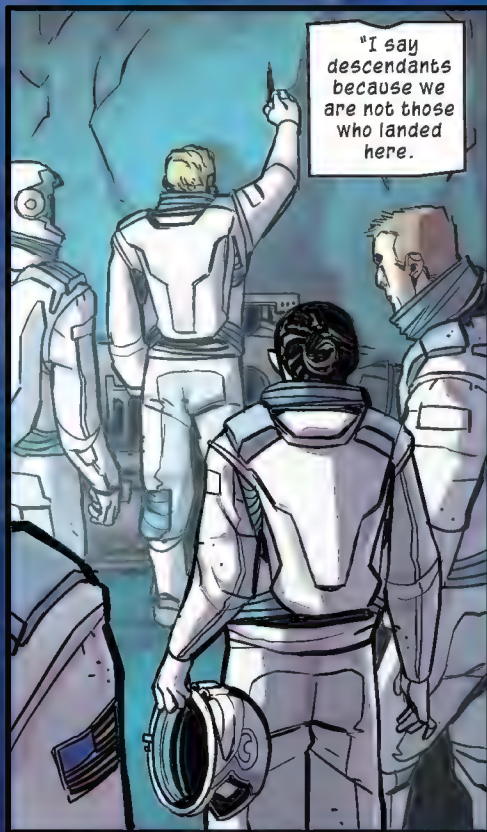
"In that endeavor
we sought safety
in hiding.



"In darkness.



"I say
descendants
because we
are not those
who landed
here.



"We are their
children. Their
children's
children.

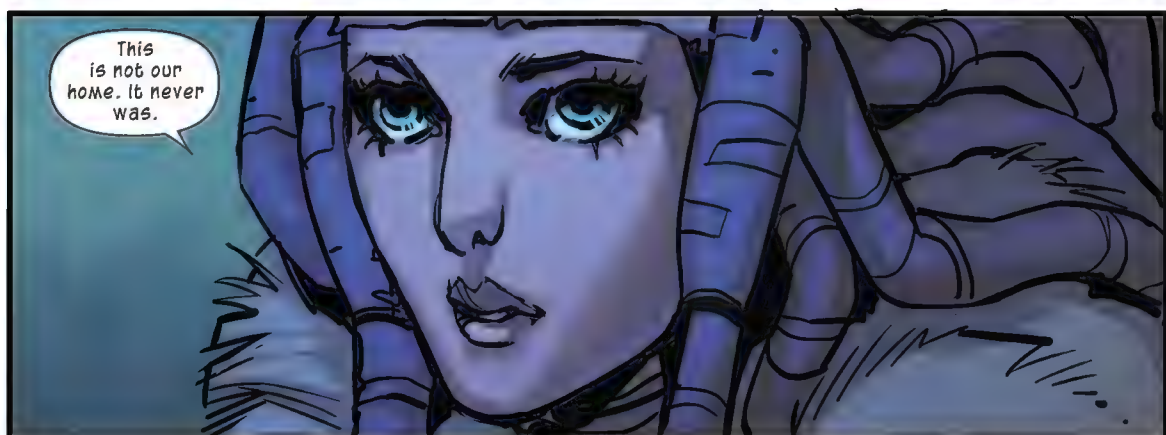


"Eventually, we
ventured back out
into the world, but
disguised so we
might have a
better chance.



"So that we might not just
survive, but thrive."









In many ways, Elgrove is not to be blamed. He is a victim.

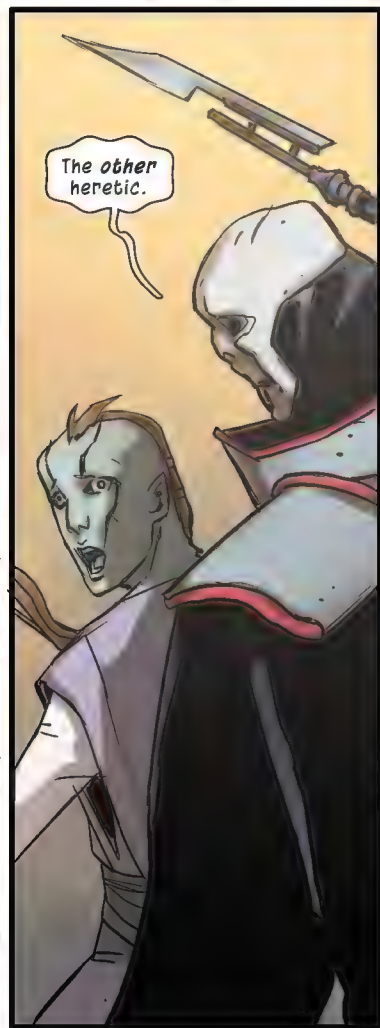


And yet, be that as it may, he is part of this sickness.

A weak part of our society that must be purged lest it infects the rest of us with its...poison.



Oh no...

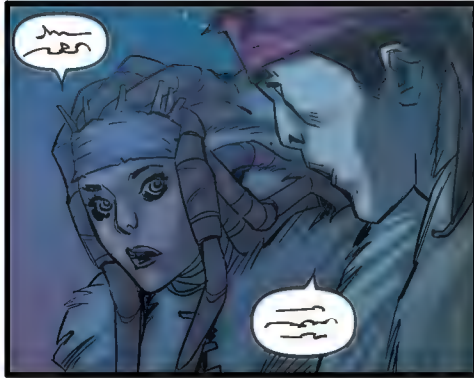


The other heretic.



Where are you leading us, Remi?

Back to my home. Well, my dwelling. I have more research of my travels. There may be more information of use to you in your quest.

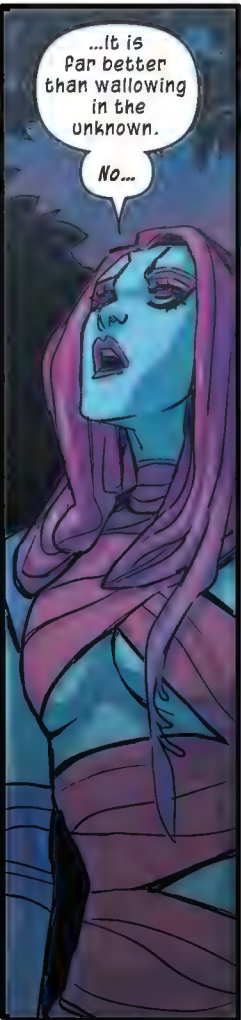


Is everything okay, Amatheia?

Ezra is not certain this is a good idea. It is not our custom to trust anyone. Especially a Terrillian such as yourself.

I get that, but my Pather always told me that one cannot be afraid of discovery.

That however difficult the truth may be at times...



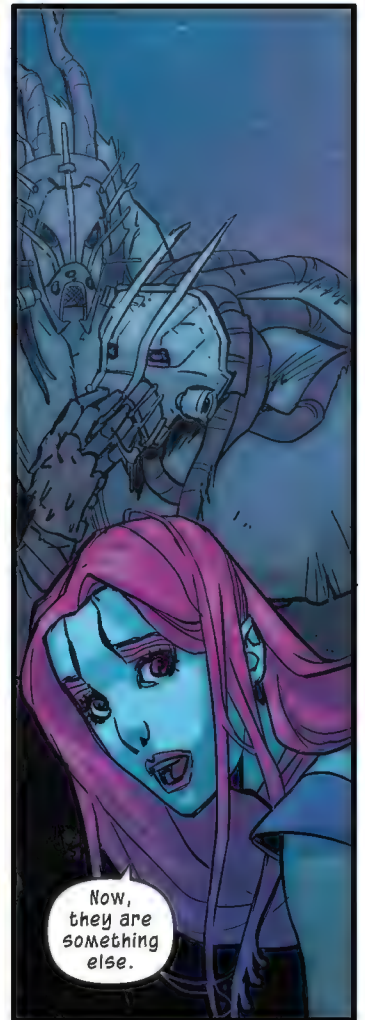
...It is far better than wallowing in the unknown.

No...



Who are they?

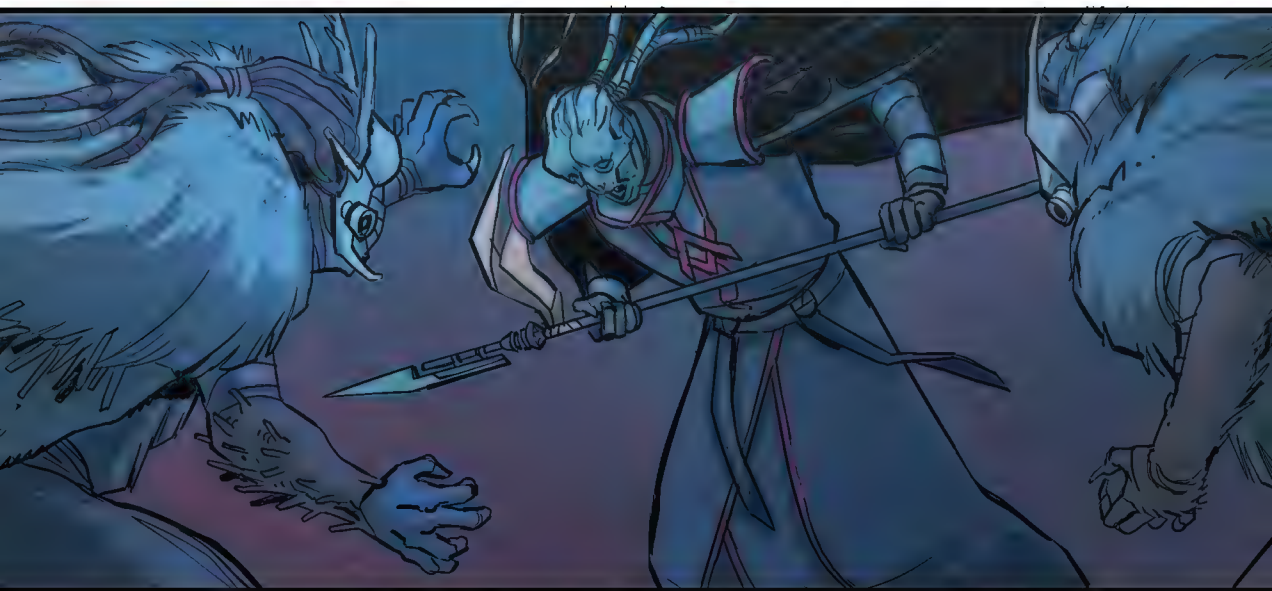
Friends... they were friends.

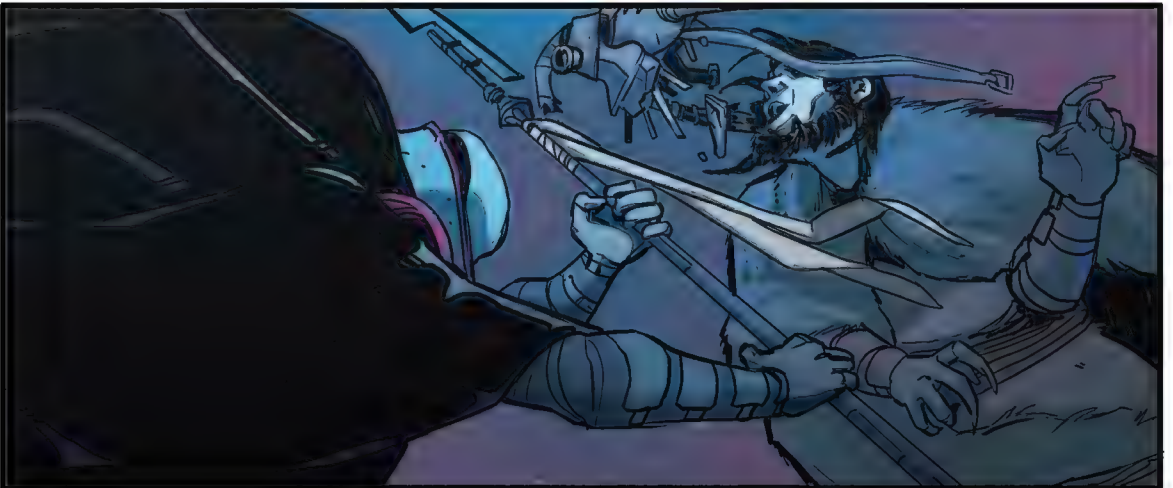
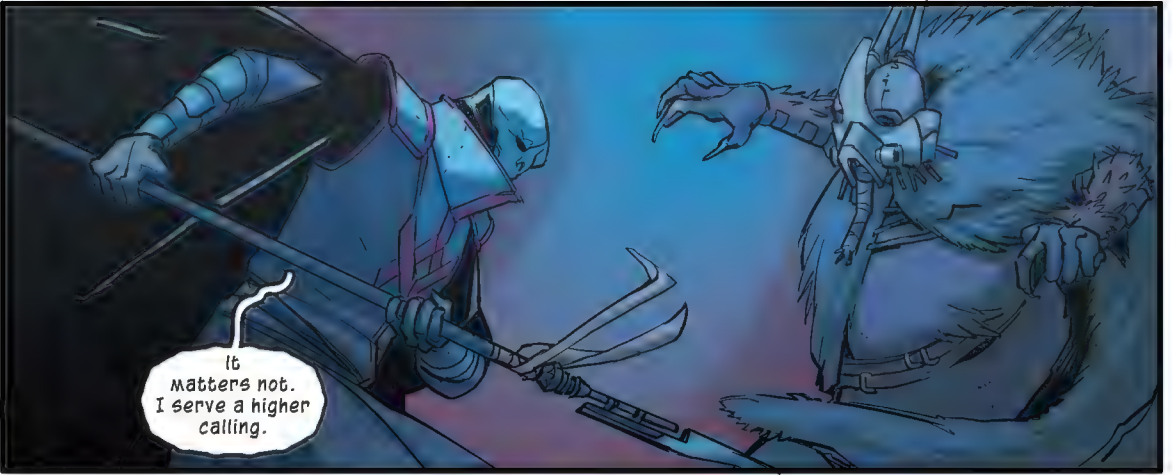
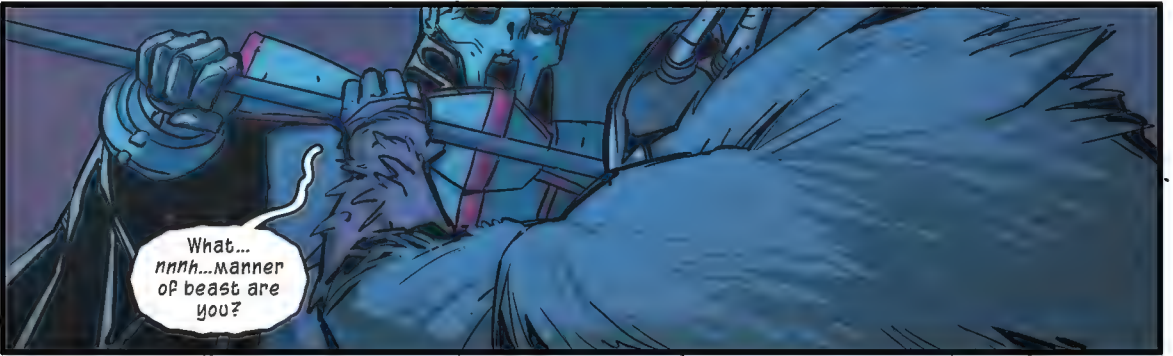
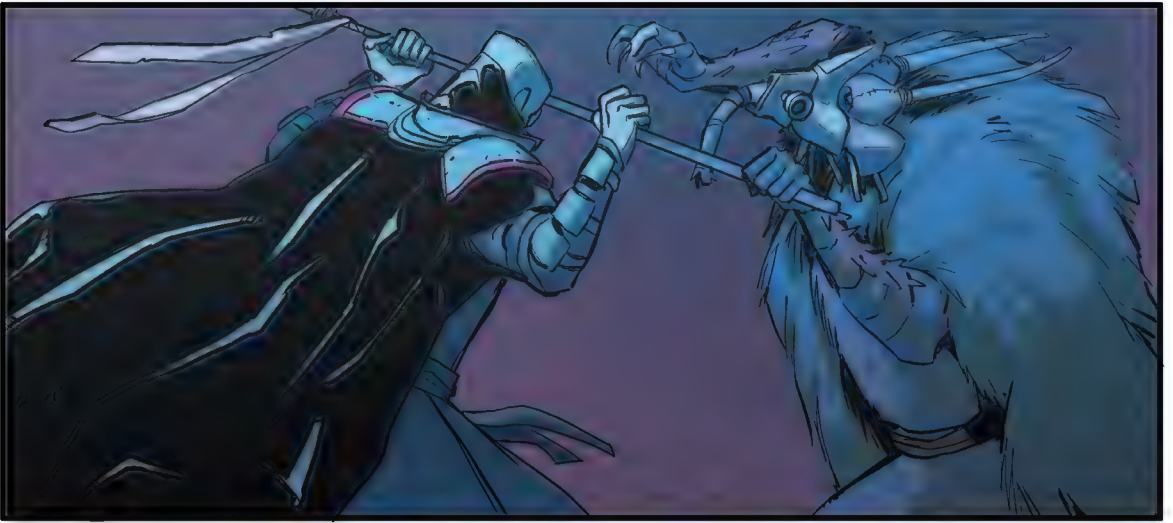


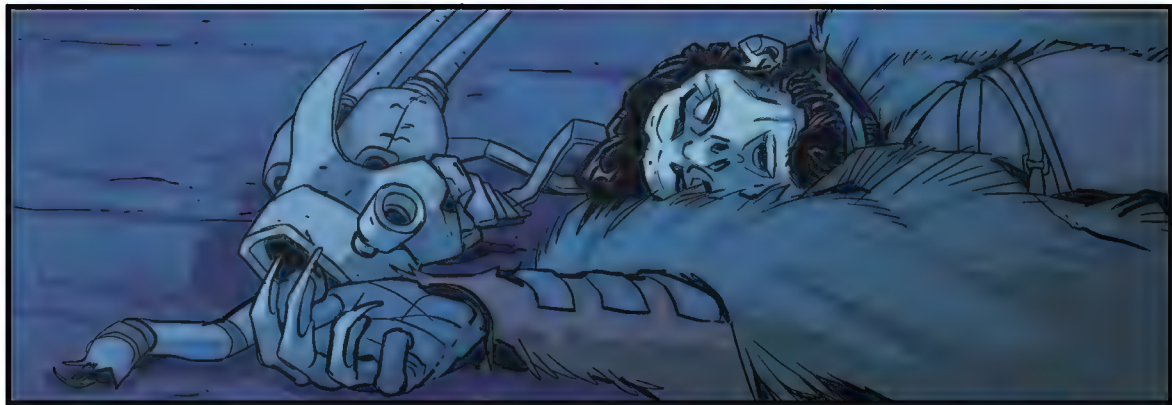
Now, they are something else.

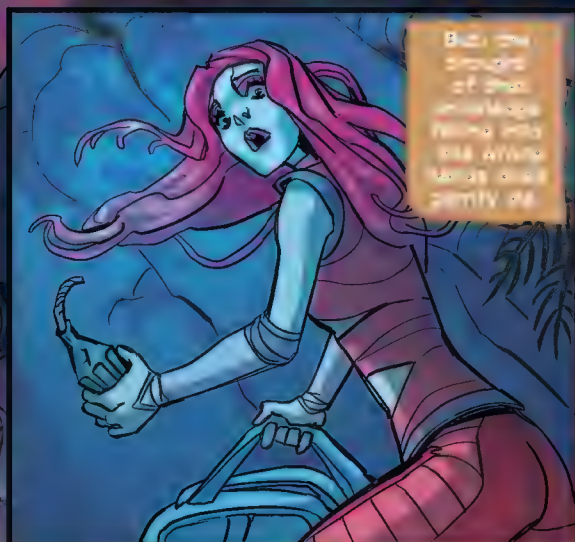


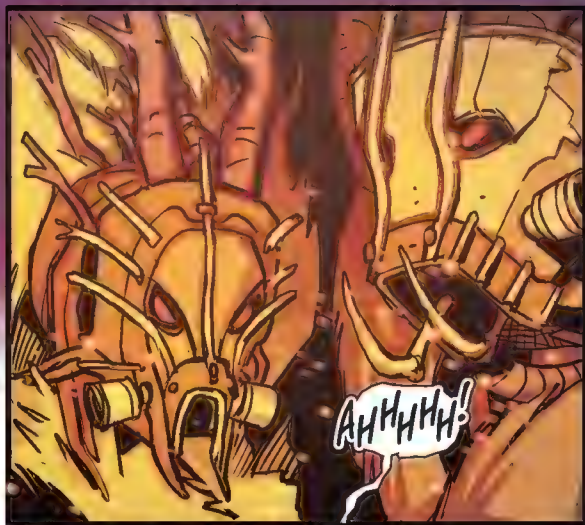
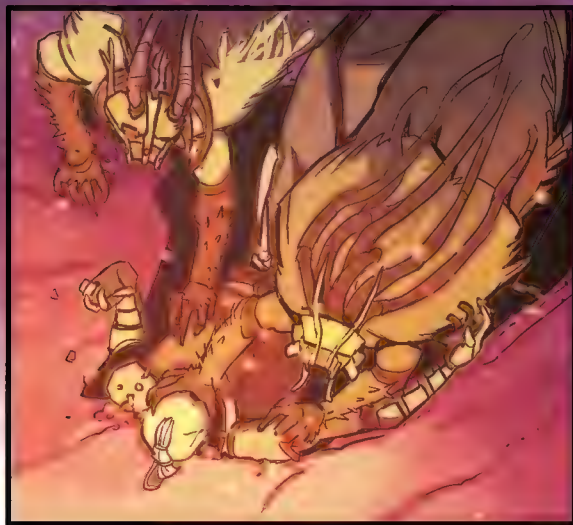
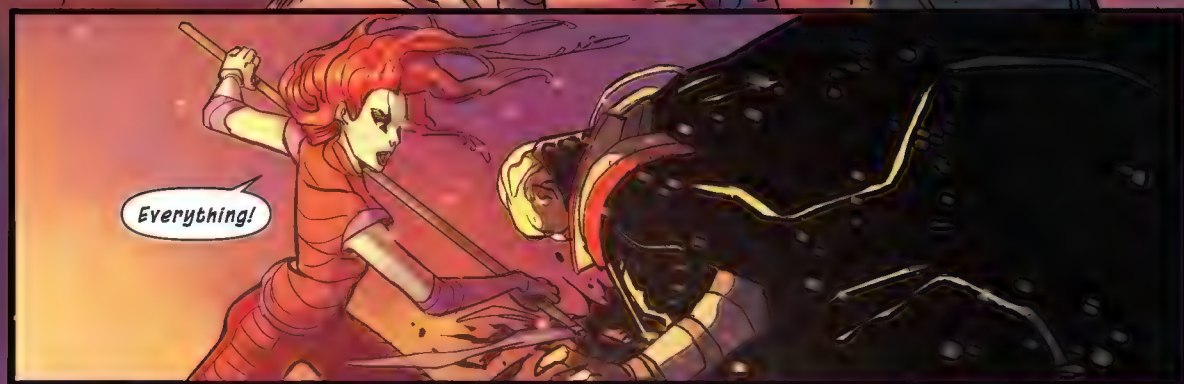
An omen.





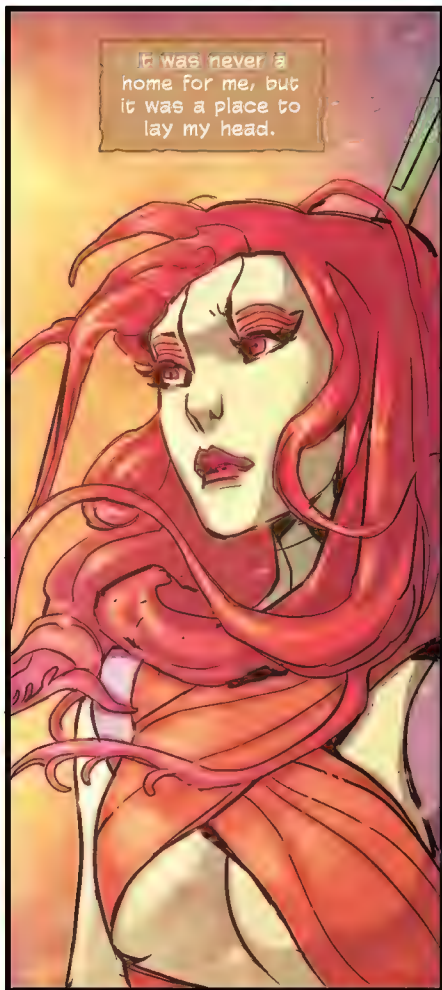








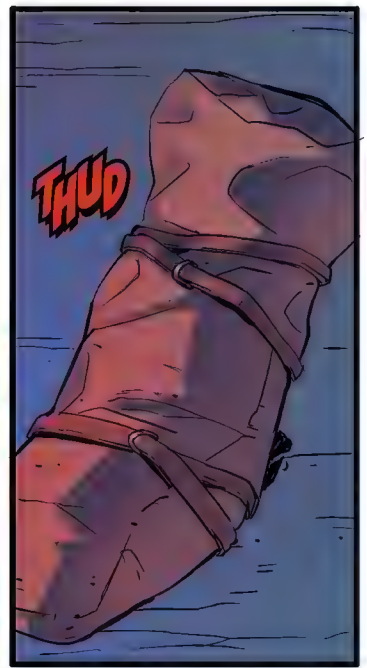
It was never a
home for me, but
it was a place to
lay my head.

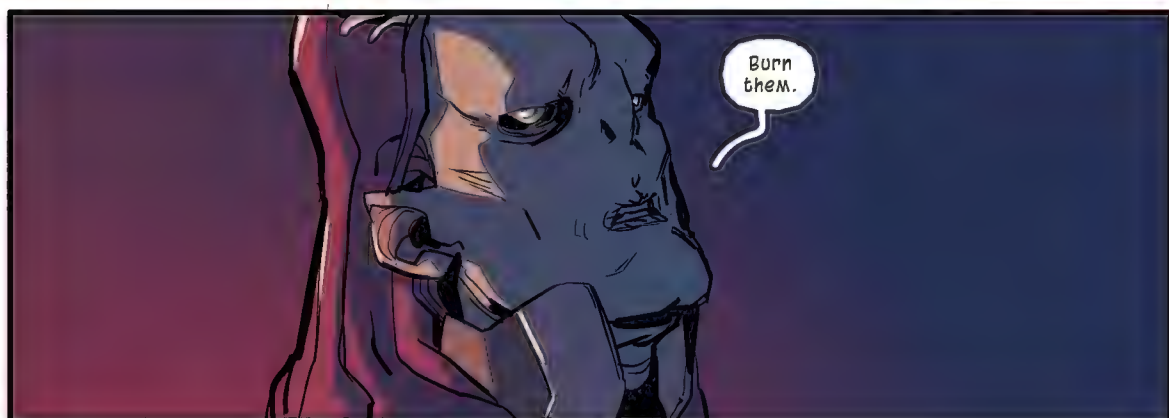


It's all gone now.
Yet another bridge
to my past burnt
behind me.

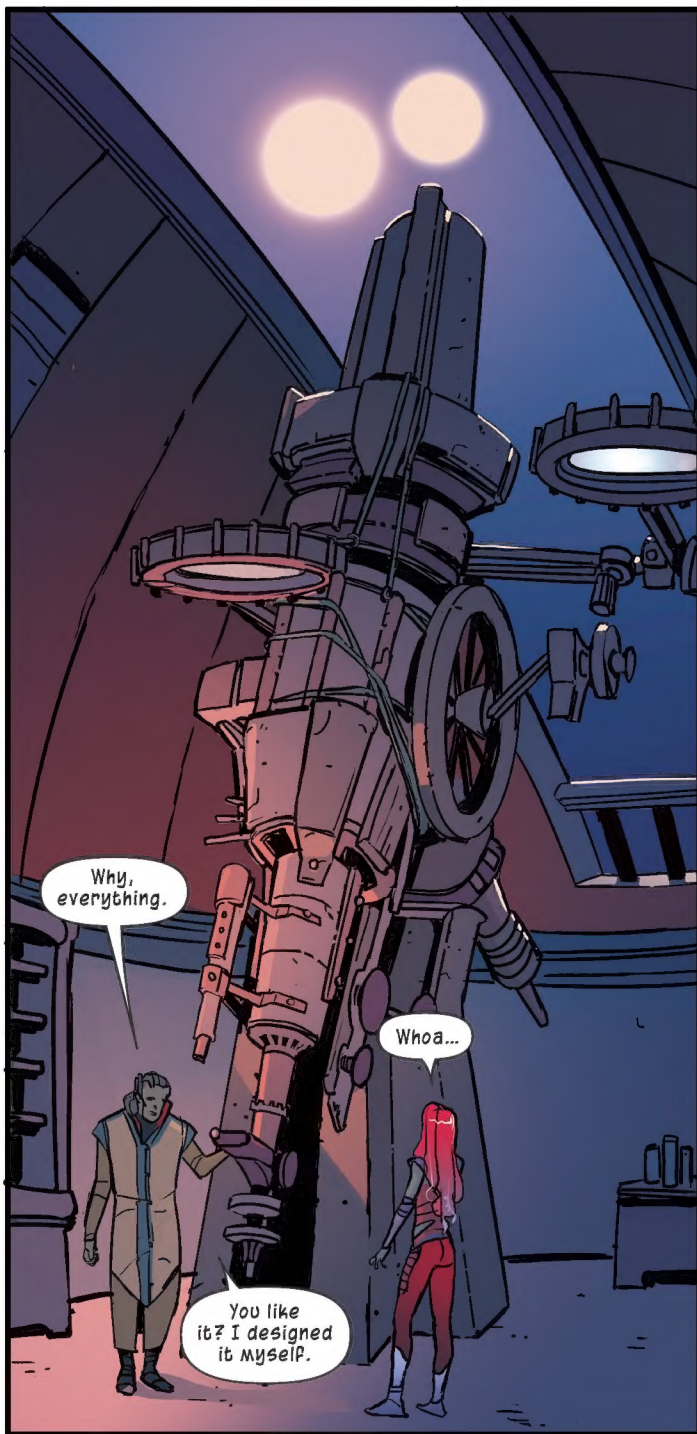


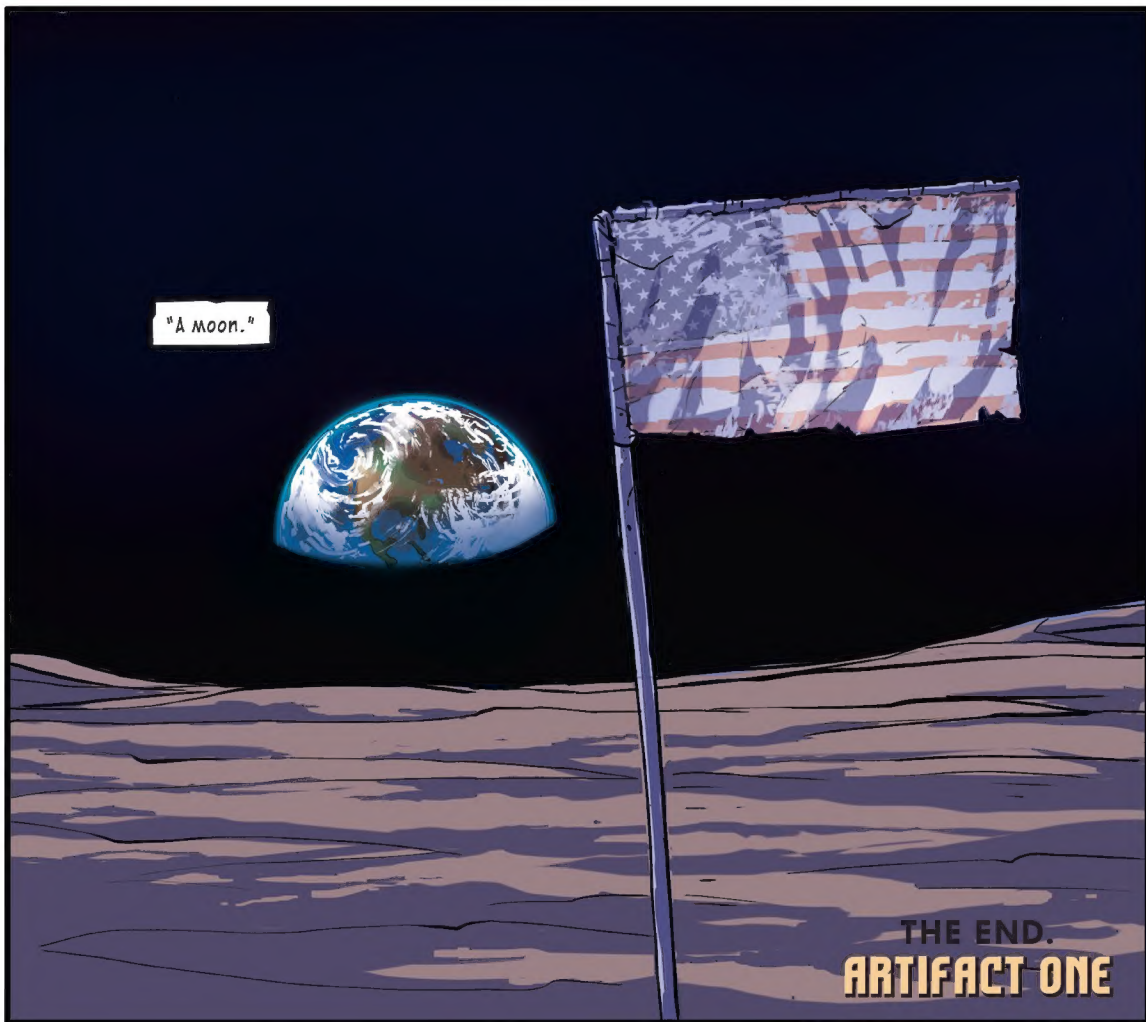
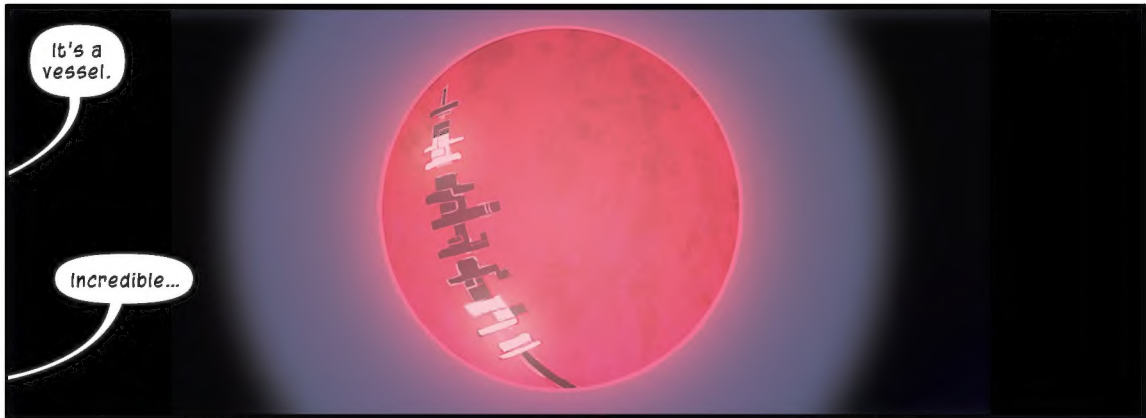














**THANKS FOR
READING!**